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Campus ON THE River

William Van O'Connor

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Campus on the River

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Modern Prose: Form and Style

A Casebook on Ezra Pound

Campus on the River

William Van O'Connor

Campus on the River

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For John T. Hawes

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Only where love and need are one,
And the work is play for mortal stakes,
Is the deed ever really done
For Heaven and the future's sakes.

Robert Frost

A Natural Force

The manager of Raymond's Department Store Annex, in the shopping area near the university, had phoned the history department to say that the father of Timothy Rice should come to the store right away. Raymond's was not a first-class store, and the goods it sold were often a little shoddy. People around the university shopped there because it was convenient. Tim had been studying in the large room called the "bull pen," the office of the eight teaching assistants and instructors, most of whom were working on their Ph.D.'s Miss Harris, the department's secretary, had told him he'd better hurry. Not that she knew what the manager, Mr. Quigley, wanted—but he had sounded upset and angry.

Tim Rice's light blue eyes had recently begun to look a little wild, and the occasional jerky movements of his head as he talked indicated that he was on the ragged edge. Janet, his wife, had a harried look, and her eyes had taken on a squint that seemed to say she couldn't understand what had happened to her family. What had happened was that Tim's relationship with ten-year-old Tim, Jr., had been heading for a crisis, the culmination of a seven-year struggle between them.

Tim was out of breath when he reached the glass-enclosed manager's office on the second floor of the store, and his head twitched several times to the left in sharp little jerks. He recognized the man sitting at the desk as Mr. Quigley, having seen him before on a few occasions in the store and in the neighborhood. Mr. Quigley's face was tinged with a pinkish purple that meant either a bad heart or extreme irritation. A young woman, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, stood at one end of the desk, and young Tim stood at the other end. They were trying to stare each other down. Her lips were pursed and her body seemed rigid. The hard line of the boy's chin and the twist of his mouth said that she and her kind, whatever they might be, weren't worth his attention. Tim had seen that look often enough and had frequently been tempted to slap it off his son's face. But being slapped infuriated the boy, and he would scream wildly for the benefit of the neighbors and because then his mother invariably intervened on his behalf. He was a good-looking boy, which somehow made his contemptuous defiance all the more maddening.

All three people in the office looked toward Tim as he closed the door behind him.

"I'm Mr. Rice—what did the boy do?"

"Mr. Rice, Mr. Rice," the man said, "this son of yours is the most impudent young puppy I've ever had in here.

I'm sorely tempted to have him arrested. He stole a screw driver. That's bad enough, but when he was asked either to pay for it or to put it back on the counter he became insulting. He said this young lady here, Miss Jones, was cross-eyed, and must have been looking at someone else." Mr. Quigley shook his head. Tim looked at Miss Jones; one eye was indeed slightly crossed. He turned away in embarrassment. Tim knew his son well enough to have to admit that, when cornered, he would use such a thing as a way of taking the offensive.

Mr. Quigley said, "She marched him up here. When I asked whether he had taken it, he just shrugged. Then he reached into his pocket and took out a dollar. Then he said, 'Is there anything in the store *worth* buying?' "

"I'm sorry," Tim said, "I'm very sorry. What can I do?"

Mr. Quigley slumped a little, as though relieved that the boy's father was not going to be insulting too. "Mr. Rice," he answered, his voice calmer, "you know this sort of thing happens often enough, but most of the young culprits have the decency to be ashamed. We don't want to have them arrested. Kids sometimes do things without thinking of the consequences. Just take him along home with you." He gestured them out.

Tim took his son by the arm, wheeling him around sharply. The boy's arm was rigid—a sign that he had no intention of accepting defeat.

Tim steered him out of the office, down the stairs, and out the side door to the street. At the corner young Tim started left, toward home, but his father turned him straight ahead, in the direction of the campus and the river at its far side. Neither of them paid any heed to the students leaving the campus and heading for one of the rooming houses or restaurants on this side of the campus.

"You going to tell Mom?" Young Tim rarely quarreled

with his mother, mostly because she almost never gave him a specific command. His quarrel was with his father and with authority.

"Maybe you should tell her," Tim said.

There was no reply. Tim let go of his son's elbow. They walked on in silence, along the mall, past the dormitories, finally coming to the top of the grassy bank that led down to the river's edge. There were three empty coal barges anchored below them, and a motorboat was moving slowly upstream.

Tim sat down on the grass, but young Tim remained standing. "Do you want to tell me about it?" Tim asked.

"About what?" The evasive reply was one of the boy's devices. It was a way of slowing down the opposition.

"The screw driver. Damn it, you know what I'm talking about. You went into the store with a dollar, maybe more, and instead of buying the screw driver, you stole it. Why?"

"Oh, they think they're so much! The whole place is snooty. She's cross-eyed back of those phony glasses."

"That makes a lot of sense. A clerk has a slightly cocked eye, so you steal a screw driver."

"Oh, I can't explain it. I just did."

"Go along someplace, please," Tim said irritably. "Take a walk. I'll wait here." Young Tim neither moved nor looked at his father. In a moment, he started down the bank, as though the walk were his idea.

Tim sometimes felt that his having been in the army during young Tim's earliest years explained much of their present relationship. He had been in Korea, and when he got home for good, Tim was already three years old. Janet was living in a dingy three-room apartment and she had let the child pretty much run the show. He went to bed when he felt like it, ate when he felt like it, and tolerated only the mildest forms of discipline. The second night Tim was home, he decided that the boy should go to bed at

eight o'clock. Young Tim got up from his bed and came into the living room thirty-seven times. Tim had counted, fascinated by such persistence. There were no tears and there was no spanking. Young Tim finally fell asleep as he was being carried, for the thirty-seventh time, back to his bed.

Now, from where he sat, Tim had seen his son walk along the river's edge and stop at one of the barges. On its prow was painted *Acme Towing*. He seemed to be studying something inside the empty barge.

The river was one of the boy's haunts. Sometimes he brought home shells and rocks. When he was seven or eight, he had brought home a huge rock, weighing thirty-five or forty pounds. He was drenched with perspiration and he had been too tired to eat supper. Janet had asked why he had carried it all the way home. "I wanted to, that's all." *I wanted to, that's all* was a kind of refrain with the boy. In a way, his persistence was admirable.

What worried Tim was his son's undeclared war against authority. Not that he didn't obey certain rules. He went to bed at a regular hour, he got to school on time, and at school he apparently did what was required of him—at least his parents were never called about disciplinary matters. He had learned that he could not battle all day long—but deep down he rejected the right of anyone to tell him what he had to do. Anger surfaced easily in him and, aroused, he would say, "I don't have to! I don't have to do anything!" His father sometimes waited out these periods, then tried to reason with him. The result was always the same. Even when he was silent, young Tim seemed to be saying, *You want me to say I'll do what other people, grownups, want me to, but I won't. I don't have to! I don't have to do anything.* But today was the first time, so far as Tim knew, that the boy had ever carried his battle against authority to a point where it could get him

publicly into trouble. Tim believed his son had taken the screw driver because Raymond's Department Store, for some reason, was an affront to him. He wondered whether the rather grimy circumstances of their home life had caused his son to feel abused or put upon.

Home was half of an army barracks on the far side of the campus. The yard was gravel, and diapers, underwear and other laundry were usually hanging on clotheslines up and down the three rows of barracks. The Rices had lived there for five years. In order to finish getting his degree, Tim had done part-time teaching for three years and had no choice but to accept the university's half-subsidized quarters. Janet was not much given to complaints—but the strain was telling on her too. Had it been just the two of them, they could have ridden out the period, but young Tim added daily, almost hourly, to the strain.

Tim breathed in deeply and began to stretch out on the grass, but his attention was caught by activity near the Acme barge. A heavy-chested, paunchy man, wearing a captain's cap, was talking to a skinny fellow dressed only in canvas pants and sneakers. Young Tim was listening to them, but seemed concerned not to get too close to either. The big man turned toward the boy and pointed his finger at him, whether in accusation or explanation Tim could not tell. The skinny fellow started out with long strides toward the third barge, fifty yards below the middle barge. Young Tim then said something to the captain. Both turned and looked up the hill, with young Tim pointing, as though saying, "He's my father."

Tim got up and started down the bank toward them. What the boy had done this time he had no idea. He had not been watching closely.

The big man was unshaven, and had the bloated features common to hard drinkers. The cap was pushed back on his head. His eyes were hard but not humorless.

"Is this little bastard yours, chum?" he asked, gesturing with the thumb of his dirty right hand toward young Tim. "He claims he's yours." Young Tim's eyes were brimming with tears, but he was trying hard to hold them back.

"Yes, he's my son. What's the trouble?"

"He's blackmailing me," the man said. He laughed. "The little bastard, he's a natural force. If you could plug a line into him, he'd give you power enough to feed a turbine." And he laughed again.

"He was going to let his kittens die," young Tim said. "They're in the bottom of this barge." The boy's chin was set, the way it had been at Raymond's.

"Ah, I'm a cruel son of a bitch," the man said, and laughed again. Turning to Tim he said, "He climbed right up there next to the wheelhouse and threatened me."

"He said he wasn't going to feed the kittens," young Tim said. "He was going to let them die. One is dead already. And the mother looks awfully scrawny."

"The company don't pay me nothin' to nursemaid cats, sonny. Not a penny. Mister," he said to Tim, "this little mutt was going to have the police and the humane society and maybe the goddam Marines on me about them cats. So I made a deal with him. I give him the cats, in return for which he calls off the goddam law. Them cats is all yours, sonny," the man said, taking off his cap in mock congratulations. Then he started along the path toward the first of the three barges.

Young Tim, his face tense, looked up at his father as though daring him to refuse the kittens and the mother cat. Tim felt a sudden rush of affection for his son.

Trying not to smile, Tim said, "How are you going to get them out of there, son?"

"That other guy's bringing a ladder," the boy said, pointing toward the third barge. "The captain told him to get it."

After several minutes, the head and the body of the man appeared over the edge of the barge. He lowered a ladder to the ground, then leaped lightly over the side. Young Tim walked toward him to help carry the ladder. Having lowered the ladder, the two of them went down into the hold, and Tim could hear his son ask whether the cat would live. The man said, "I don't know. Looks to me like Sally's had it."

Young Tim reappeared, three kittens clutched in his arms, and leaped to the ground without upsetting them. In a moment, the man emerged carrying Sally. Her ribs showed through the skin, and the coal dust had left her fur almost black. "She might make it," the man said, handing her to Tim.

"Thank you," Tim said in a rather formal tone. As he said it, he felt somewhat confused. He knew he should be grateful, but he was not yet able to say exactly why.

"Don't mention it," the man said. "Don't mention it." And he scratched the sweaty chestnut-colored hair on his thin chest.

The Adventures of Peter

Peter Freutzel was on a student visa and was obliged to check in at regular intervals with the foreign students' office. At first it had been easy enough for him to go to the office, fill out all the necessary forms, and discuss his thesis with his advisor, Professor Thomas. From childhood Peter had been extremely shy, and only his unusually high intelligence, the ease with which he mastered his textbooks, made school bearable.

At first, too, he had found America exhilarating, if rather bizarre. The exhilaration probably derived from its bigness and the relaxed way in which people said hello or asked you what time it was. He was given free board and room at a fraternity house, and the students there took to calling

him Peter Sauerkraut, or Pete, or sometimes Kraut. He found America strange because the architecture was not predictable the way it was at home; furniture came in an odd assortment of styles, and in classes professors listened when students disagreed with something the professors had said. The newness of everything made him forget, or almost forget, his shyness, and he moved through his days so quickly that he did not have time to think about himself. He wrote two letters each week to his mother, but because she took solemn exception to his saying he liked anything that differed from what he had known at home, he soon learned to write only about how neatly he kept his room, the A's he got on quizzes, and how much he missed his father and mother, his own room, and German music.

The trouble had begun with registration for the second semester. He had failed to have two of the professors initial his program and thereby approve his registration for their classes. The clerk in the administration building said he could not complete his registration until he had the initials. This happened on a Friday afternoon, and he had decided he would not go to the graduate building to try to find the professors—he would wait until Monday morning and catch them before they left their offices for class.

The next evening in his room, looking at himself in the mirror, Peter decided to raise a beard. His mother would have said neat beards were for eminent men and ragged beards for bohemians in Paris. He had no intention of telling his mother about the beard. Peter decided he would have a long Viking beard. His eyes were pale blue, behind thick-lensed, steel-rimmed glasses; he was thin, and he gestured nervously. A Viking beard, of the sort he saw occasionally on the campus, would give him more assurance and make him feel freer. About nine thirty, a round-faced, pink-cheeked boy named Tommy Long poked his head in

the door and asked if Pete wanted to go down town to the Strip for a few beers. At home Peter rarely drank beer, but he had heard students talk about the Strip and was anxious to see it. The party consisted of five boys, including Peter. One of them had a car and they all piled into it. There was snow on the ground, but the night was clear. Peter said very little, and that only when Tommy Long put a question to him.

The Strip was a square block of night clubs, lit on the outside by garish neon signs. The club Peter's group went to had a five-piece orchestra—three horns, piano and drums. The din they raised gave him a headache. He drank his beer quickly and found that he liked it. A large-breasted blonde, wearing a black dress with sequins and rhinestones, served them. In passing Peter, she let her thigh rub against his arm. And she winked at him. In an hour he had five beers. Two of the boys were drinking gin. Peter had taken his glasses off several times and wiped them on his paper napkin. The boys in his party were joking and talking, but it was hard to hear what they were saying and he did not try to understand them.

At twelve o'clock, five girls, dressed in glittering white costumes and wearing huge plumed hats, came out in a chorus line. Peter did not think they danced well, but he paid close attention when they turned their backs to the customers. The drummer had begun a military roll. As the girls turned again, he hit the bass drum with the foot pedal and crashed his stick against the cymbal. The girls had taken off their brassières. They danced a few steps, kicking up their right legs in unison; then, covering their breasts with their hats, they danced off stage. Peter's stomach was uneasy and his headache had increased, but he joined Tommy Long in a sixth beer, the "one for the road."

On the way home, he had to ask the boy driving to let him out. He was violently sick in back of the car and

finally he sat down on the curb. Tommy Long told the others to go on back to the fraternity house and waited until Peter felt well enough to walk home. The next morning, Sunday, for the first time, Peter did not get up for church.

Peter had not paid much attention to girls. His parents assumed he would not marry until he was established professionally. When the time came, his mother and father would undoubtedly arrange a meeting with the right girl. And his shyness had kept him from seeking out casual relationships with girls. His first week on campus, he had attended a party given by one of the sororities for new foreign students. He remembered one girl vividly. She was tall, self-assured, and had lavender eyes. Her lipstick was luxuriously red and waxlike, and Peter had found it hard to look at any other part of her face. She had asked Peter a number of questions about Germany, and he had tried, as best he could, to answer them. It had not occurred to him to ask to see her again.

On Sunday evening, he went into Tommy Long's room to ask for advice. Tommy wore a green visor to protect his eyes from the glare of the lamp. Peter asked him what he should do. "Well, for Christ's sake, call her up and ask for a date," Tommy said. "But I'm warning you, she's a popular babe and you're entering some stiff competition trying to take her out." Peter said he knew he could not talk to her on the phone because just ordinary telephone calls frightened him. Tommy then said the only thing to do was to call on her.

"Do it tonight," he said, "and get the matter settled."

He got out a bottle and insisted that Peter take two shots of Scotch to give him courage. Peter was nervous about going to see her, but he felt that Tommy knew how such things were done.

The girl, called by one of her sorority sisters, had come

down to the living room. She seemed not to remember him, even when he told her his name. She did not have the waxlike red lipstick on, but her pale lips were full. Peter's heart beat rapidly. Finally, he blurted out that he wanted her to go out with him. The girl, sitting next to him on the sofa, pursed her lips and looked sharply at him. "Look, Buster," she said, "I don't even know you. Besides, you're a little tanked up. Why don't you go home like a good fellow?" Without looking at her, Peter got to the door.

Tommy was sitting in the lounge when Peter returned and he asked how it had gone. "She didn't remember me," Peter said, his face white, and started up the stairs. "Don't let that get you down," Tommy called after him. "She's a real popular bitch—you can't expect her to remember everyone she meets." But Peter did not stop to discuss the whys of her not remembering him. He got into bed quickly and buried his head in the pillow.

The next morning he attended classes, but he did not ask the professors to initial his program. In fact, half the semester went by before the foreign students' office discovered he was not registered. Mr. Collingwood Smith, the director, sent him a note asking him to stop in for a talk. Peter did not respond to this, nor to a second note several days later. But Mr. Smith managed to get him on the phone. He told him to come to his office right away. A peremptory order had always served to make Peter respond quickly and he walked hurriedly to Mr. Smith's office. Mr. Smith was a nervous man with thin sandy hair. He invited Peter to sit down and asked why he hadn't registered. Peter simply said, "I couldn't." "But you have a scholarship," Mr. Smith went on. "Therefore the reason couldn't be financial. What is it?" "I couldn't," Peter said. Mr. Smith settled in his chair and looked at Peter, who was fingering his beard nervously. The beard had not grown to a Viking fullness: it was scraggly and mixed in color, partly blond,

partly dark. "You realize that you may have lost a whole semester of credits for no good reason, so far as I can see?" "Yes, I know," Peter said. Mr. Smith sighed. Past experience told him that he would see more of Peter.

Peter did not tell Mr. Smith that all was not well between the fraternity boys and himself. He was no longer able to make his bed or to keep his room in order. Peter used almost all of his spending money to buy beer. Usually the empty cans were on the window sill or the desk or the floor, and a beery odor emanated from his room into the hall. The boys had given a party for the sorority girls who occupied the house across the street, and Peter had proposed to a plump, blue-eyed girl with light hair who reminded him of girls he had seen in Germany. Peter had consumed five beers but he didn't feel drunk. The girl had climbed up on a chair and announced that Peter wanted to marry her. Tommy Long took Peter out on the back porch and told him that he'd have to get hold of himself—if Peter couldn't handle beer any better than that, he ought to quit drinking it altogether. The next morning Peter had overheard two of the boys saying that the house would have to get rid of Peter Sauerkraut.

To add to Peter's problems, Mr. Smith said that he would have to petition the graduate school about a later registration. Possibly Dean Summers would approve; otherwise Peter would lose half a year's credits. Peter said he was sorry. Then he asked Mr. Smith how to go about moving from the frat house, and if there was a chance of getting a part-time job. He'd need a job if he had to pay rent. Mr. Smith made two phone calls. He wrote down the address of a rooming house and the name of the personnel director at the hospital, and handed the slip to Peter. He told Peter to phone him about his work schedule. Peter went back to the house, packed his things, and moved to the rooming house. He disliked the fat red-faced landlady

on sight, and she made no effort to hide her distaste for him. Then he walked over to the hospital, saw the personnel director, and was given a job sweeping, from ten o'clock at night to one in the morning. He called Mr. Smith as directed.

Back in his new room, he sat facing a wall, once white, now grimy with dirt and grease. In the eaves of the house, five or six pigeons made *bloomph bloomph bloomph* sounds. Peter looked out the window and saw that grayish-white pigeon droppings were thick on the shingled roof. He lay down on the bed, with his hand on his stomach. He hoped he wasn't going to be sick.

At a quarter to ten, the landlady called Peter to the phone. It was Mr. Smith. "Peter," he said, "it's time to go to work." "Yes, sir," Peter said. He went back to his room and changed his clothes. At the hospital, an orderly gave him a broom and took him to the seventh floor. The seventh floor was used by students in physiology. There were several skinned cats in huge bell jars and half a dozen human skeletons used in the study of anatomy. Hanging on hooks were the white coats used by laboratory instructors. Textbooks were scattered about on tables. The whole floor smelled of formaldehyde. Peter was to pick up all the books, straighten anything that needed straightening, open the windows wide and air the place, and sweep up. When he finished, he could leave. His pay check would be mailed to him.

Every night thereafter for several weeks, Mr. Smith called Peter at a quarter to ten, and Peter left for the hospital. Soon he liked the routine of cleaning up the seventh floor. He used the service elevator, thereby avoiding hospital personnel as much as possible, and especially the orderly who was responsible for his doing a satisfactory job. Peter liked the loneliness of the seventh floor.

A few days later, Peter had a call from Mr. Smith, and

again he hurried over to his office. Mr. Smith tried to be a patient man, and, smiling faintly, he gestured Peter into the large leather chair that he reserved for the more difficult cases. It was the nearest he could come to the analyst's couch. "What's the trouble with your thesis, Peter? Professor Thomas told me that your preliminary work on it went very well—then you quit going to see him. What is it?" Peter covered his eyes with his hand. "It's my arm." "Your arm, Peter?" "Yes, sir. When I try to write a page, my arm becomes stiff and tight and I can't hold a pencil. I can write letters or sign my name, but when I try to work on my thesis my arm goes dead." Mr. Smith picked up the phone and called the student health center. After hanging up, he told Peter to go see Professor Weinberg. Peter thanked him and went directly to the health center.

Professor Weinberg, who wore heavy glasses and sucked at an unlit pipe, gestured Peter to sit down. He took out a card and asked for Peter's name and address. Then he asked Peter to talk about himself, where he was born, and something about his family. Peter began hesitantly, but with some prompting related most of his vital statistics. Professor Weinberg listened, sucking on the stem of his pipe. When Peter finished, the professor said, "Look, my boy, I don't think we ought to try any kind of analysis—it would take too long." He reached into his desk drawer and took out a small red sponge-rubber ball. "Here, catch!" He tossed it to Peter. "Squeeze it. Carry it in your pocket and squeeze it every few minutes. Squeeze it for ten minutes before you sit down to write on your thesis. If this doesn't work, we'll try something else." Peter got up and put the ball in his pocket. By the time he got to his room, his arm ached from squeezing the ball. But when he sat at his desk, he found that he could write a few sentences before the stiffness returned. He spent the rest of the

afternoon and the early evening alternately squeezing the ball and writing sentences.

Peter had stopped drinking beer and he went to his classes regularly. It was easy for him to go to his meals because the red-faced landlady rang a bell at eight, twelve, and six o'clock. It was loud enough to make a deaf mute jump out of his skin. But Peter did not write the petition about late registration until Mr. Smith phoned and told him to come to his office. When he arrived, Mr. Smith handed him the form and said, "Here, sign your name. I've written it up for you." Peter signed.

"Peter," Mr. Smith said, "stop off at the health center on your way to the graduate school and say hello to Professor Weinberg." Peter went directly to Professor Weinberg's office. "How's the arm, boy?" Professor Weinberg asked as soon as he saw Peter. "It gets better when I squeeze the red ball." "Fine, keep up the good work." It had not occurred to Peter to ask before, but now he asked Professor Weinberg, "Professor, why should my arm become stiff?" Professor Weinberg took the pipe out of his mouth and said, "You have a beachcomber's syndrome." "I see," said Peter, and left without saying good-by. All the way to the graduate school office, where he dropped off the petition, he wondered what Professor Weinberg meant by a "beachcomber's syndrome."

A couple of weeks later, in mid-April, Mr. Smith phoned Peter about two-thirty in the afternoon. He told him to come to his office. "Peter," he said, "you haven't been writing to your mother." Peter gazed at the floor. "Look over there in the corner," Mr. Smith said. Peter turned and saw a small desk. On it were a pile of stationery and a desk set, with pen and pencil. "Peter, you come over here Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at two thirty and write to your mother." "Yes, sir," Peter said, "but I see Professor

Thomas about my thesis at two thirty on Monday. He told me to come at exactly two thirty each Monday." "Okay, Peter, you come here at a quarter to two, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Maybe you should write it down." Peter wrote it down, even though he knew he could remember.

"How do you like the hospital job?" Mr. Smith asked him. "Fine," Peter said. "How about your social life—you see any girls?" "No, sir," Peter said. "I don't see anybody much." "Well, maybe we can fix up a date or two for you, but not until you've got that thesis finished. We're going to see that you get the degree. I've talked with Dean Summers about your petition. He's going to approve it." "That's fine," Peter said. "You can go now, Peter. By the way, I won't phone you tonight. You're in the habit of going." "Yes, sir. I like going over there." "That's good. Good-by now." "Yes, sir, thank you, sir," Peter said. Peter had several pages to go before finishing another chapter of his thesis, and he squeezed the ball energetically all the way back, occasionally throwing it up in the air and catching it.

In late May, Professor Thomas sent Mr. Smith a note, saying that Peter had submitted the final chapter of his thesis, and that his M.A. was assured if he took his final course exams and his orals. The next time Peter visited Mr. Smith's office to write home, Mr. Smith had him write down his examination schedule. The day before the examinations began, Mr. Smith memorized Peter's schedule. The next day, at nine o'clock, he went to Peter's rooming house. Peter expressed no surprise when he saw who his visitor was. On each of the next three days, Mr. Smith picked Peter up fifteen minutes before exam time and walked him to the examination room. Peter said almost nothing, but he did seem grateful.

On Monday, when he learned that Peter had earned A's in all four courses, Mr. Smith was as pleased as he would

have been had he earned the A's himself. He expected Peter at a quarter of two to write another letter to his mother. The girl Mr. Smith had in mind for Peter was Wilma Peiffer. He picked up the phone and called her. She was going to Germany in the summer. She was blue-eyed, light-haired, pretty in a prim way, and, best of all, she was bossy. Mr. Smith knew he couldn't have done better if he had had Univac pick out a girl friend for Peter Freutzel.

Mr. Smith told Wilma that he'd like to introduce her to a rather lonely German boy. She could practice speaking German with him, and when she was in Berlin that summer, she'd know at least one family. Wilma thanked him and said that she could come over to Mr. Smith's office at two fifteen.

Peter stuttered when being introduced to Miss Peiffer, but he seemed delighted to meet her. Mr. Smith excused himself and stayed in the outer office for fifteen minutes. When he returned, he could see that Wilma had the situation well under control. The three of them chatted together for a few minutes, then Wilma, with Peter following, started to leave. As they reached the outer office, Mr. Smith called Peter back. In a voice he hoped Wilma could not hear, he inquired about Peter's final orals and learned that the examination was scheduled for three o'clock on Monday afternoon. He asked whether Peter felt he could get there under his own steam. Peter looked down and in a faint voice said, "I think so." "Good luck, then," Mr. Smith said, and Peter hurried out to join Miss Peiffer.

At a quarter to three on Monday afternoon, Mr. Smith was sorely tempted to call Peter, but he didn't. Peter had to do this one last act alone. But by four fifteen the suspense was too much, and he called Professor Thomas' office. "Yes, yes," Professor Thomas said, "he not only took the exam, he did very well." "That's fine," Mr. Smith said.

"Let me talk to him. I want to congratulate him." "I'm sorry," Professor Thomas answered, "he just left. A young lady had him in tow. Miss Peiffer, I think she said." "Well, thank you anyway," Mr. Smith said and hung up.

He saw Peter next on Sunday afternoon. Graduation exercises were over and Peter now had his M.A. Mr. Smith had gone to his office for a manila folder with some papers he had to examine and he was cutting across campus, back to his car. Peter and Wilma were coming toward him, arm in arm. Mr. Smith saw that Peter no longer had his beard. After greeting them, Mr. Smith inquired about its disappearance. "I made him shave it," Wilma said. "Too bohemian." Peter, looking at her sideways, seemed at once embarrassed and pleased. "I see," Mr. Smith said. "And where are you headed, to the movies?" "No," Wilma answered, "we are going to evening services. Peter says his mother likes him to go to both services on Sunday."

"Peter," Mr. Smith said, putting out his hand, "please drop me a card when you get home." Peter shook hands limply, and said that he would write as soon as he got home. Wilma nodded, reassuring Mr. Smith that Peter would write. Mr. Smith said good-by to both of them, then turned and walked off.

Ordinarily Mr. Smith didn't like bossy women, but this time he was willing to make an exception. He knew he had turned his charge over to someone who would, at the very least, see to it that Peter got safely home.

A Thesis Subject

Victor David had been a considerable figure in the history of the state, a scholar, a man of letters, and a political figure. There was a statue of him in the center of the campus, a tall, heavy-set man, with side whiskers and a long nose. The right arm was extended as though he were giving a speech. He had once been president of the university, but had relinquished that office when he was elected to the United States Senate. The dates on the plaque in the middle of the concrete base bore the dates 1847–1897.

Victor David had given speeches in the rhetorical vein common to his period and had written essays and books on political science. In their day the books had created

quite a stir and they were still listed in many scholarly bibliographies. He also had something to do with defining the autonomous rights of the university, separating it from the control of the state legislators. Commencement speakers sometimes quoted him. His sententious style sounded appropriate on such occasions. But no one thought of him as a Henry Adams or Thorstein Veblen, and the rain and snow and pigeon droppings fell against the upright figure without arousing a murmur of sympathy or even a second glance from a passer-by.

That Jimmy West decided to write a thesis about him was entirely accidental. He needed a thesis subject and had taken ironic pleasure in deciding to write about Victor David.

Thanks to a scholarship, Jimmy West had breezed through his three years of graduate courses and taken and passed his preliminary orals. He was good looking in a clean-cut blond way, and he talked easily and confidently. Students and professors alike knew that he would be a successful scholar and teacher.

The congratulations following his orals had been enthusiastic. Professor Bryce Fowler said, "*Mes félicitations, monsieur*—this was the finest oral I've attended in several years." Jimmy had thanked him and the others as they shook his hand. Strangely, Timothy Tate, his advisor, had merely shaken hands stiffly, but he hadn't said anything. Tate was a small man with closely cropped gray hair. If he disapproved of a candidate's performance, he made no effort to hide it.

Afterward, they sat in Professor Tate's office. "Look, Mr. West, just as your committee said, you handled the questions well, you have lots of information, *but* . . ."

"Yes, sir," Jimmy had said, "but what didn't I know?"

"Not what you didn't know, it's the way you know."

"I don't follow you, sir," and he had deliberately emphasized the *sir*.

"Well, you don't appear to take ideas seriously enough —you don't play for keeps. You're in danger of being too facile." Mr. Tate ran his hand over his closely cropped gray hair.

"Professors are always complaining about dull, heavy-handed scholarship. You don't want that!"

Mr. Tate had taken off his glasses and set them on his desk. "All right, we won't talk about it any more. But I will make a suggestion. I'd like you to write your thesis on something local, close at hand. Stay away from the established field, from Tudor history or the Risorgimento." He gestured with his right hand as though he were referring to fifteen or twenty commonly studied fields.

Jimmy had then said, "Grass roots!" The phrase sounded unsophisticated to him. He would have preferred to have been able to say he was writing in the period of Queen Anne or Fifteenth Century Flanders. Local history seemed trivial as well as provincial.

" 'Grass roots,' if you like," Mr. Tate had replied, putting his glasses on again. "But you'd be studying people and events for the first time. No established historian would have been in there ahead of you. The judgments will be all yours."

"I don't see what difference the period makes."

"Believe me, there can be a difference."

"All right, Mr. Tate," Jimmy had said. "I'll do it." What he had meant was that he could take any assignment and do a better than satisfactory job.

"Good then," Mr. Tate had said, standing up. "Think about a subject, then come in and we'll talk it over."

Jimmy stood up, his cheeks slightly flushed. "Yes, sir," he had said.

"Okay, Mr. West," his advisor had said, extending his hand. "It was a pretty good exam," he added, smiling.

That evening, Jimmy's fiancée, Jenny, had given a small party. But because he had been rather gloomy, it had broken up early. On his way home, across campus, he saw the statue. There was a moon, but the sky was overcast and it was drizzling. The statue was wet. "Why not!" he said aloud. He had been toying with the idea of writing a thesis on the owner of the first flour mill. It suited his ironic intent, but Victor David would do. He would do fine. Jimmy slept well and got to the library early the next morning.

There was a bibliography of Victor David's books, articles, and published speeches, so Jimmy's initial task of acquiring and reading all his published work was not difficult. He took them all to his room, the books and all the magazines, dusty and with flaked pages. The magazines included *Political Observer, The End of the Century, The Progressive,* and a half dozen others, popular in their day but now rarely referred to. He took notes on everything.

Jimmy thumbtacked a picture, torn from one of Victor David's books, onto the wall of his room, and sometimes he studied the man's face, with its dark eyes, large head, long nose, and strong jaw line. But the high stiff collar, the rich cravat and the luxurious carefully waved hair served to keep Victor David from being an obtrusive presence in the room.

Victor David had read most of the philosophers and political theorists of the nineteenth century. Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, Robert Owen, Count Claude Henri de Rouvroy de Saint-Simon, Charles Fourier, Friedrich Engels, Karl Marx, David Ricardo, Adam Smith among others. A sentence of Robert Owen's occurred frequently in Victor David's articles and speeches. "Man is the creature of circumstances—but he helps create the circumstances."

And Victor David himself had said, "In the reaches of the human spirit there stretches westward, ever westward, the land of hope." There were many other sentences of a similar character. Jimmy wasn't quite sure about the sincerity of a man who could write "westward, ever westward, the land of hope."

Having spent three weeks reading Victor David's works, he went to see his advisor, Mr. Tate.

"I wondered where you'd disappeared to," Mr. Tate said, gesturing him to a chair.

"Been reading, looking for a thesis subject."

"Any luck?"

"I've been reading Victor David, everything except the book on the higher learning. I'll get to it."

"And the play?"

"Play? That's not in the bibliography."

"Yes, he wrote a successful play, *The Crest of the Wave.* Probably it was never printed, but there must be a copy somewhere. What put you onto him?"

"Grass roots," Jimmy West said.

"Yes, of course," Mr. Tate replied. "But the man? How does he strike you?"

"Oh, late Victorian, genteel, sentimental maybe, but with a certain tough intellectuality. Of course, I haven't read everything yet." He avoided the question of sincerity and his advisor had no reason to raise it.

"And Mrs. David," Mr. Tate said, "how about her as a source of information?"

"Mrs. David? Was she a writer?"

"No. She lives on River Boulevard, at the edge of town. She must have some of his papers. I'm sure she'll have a copy of the play."

"Victor David died in 1897!" Jimmy said, pushing forward in his chair. "How old is she—a hundred and nine?"

"Maybe eighty-eight or eighty-nine. She was younger than David by eighteen or twenty years. You knew he was a suicide?"

"No, I didn't. Why did he kill himself?"

"I don't know. Possibly his wife doesn't either. You'd better read some of the news stories. As soon as most of the public details are known to you, you'll be better able to talk with his widow." Mr. Tate took his glasses off.

"Yes," Jimmy said, getting up. "I'll plan to see you in a couple of weeks."

"Keep an eye out for Linda Berry, the actress. She figures rather prominently in his story. She was the first Mrs. David. I believe she committed suicide too, a couple of years after his death. I think her career was washed up . . ." Mr. Tate put his glasses on again. Jimmy had his hand on the doorknob.

"For Pete's sake," he said.

"Yes," Mr. Tate said, smiling.

"It may be more than two weeks," Jimmy said as he opened the door, "but I'll be back."

Old newspapers were kept on the lowest level in the library stacks. *The Index-Journal,* published during David's years as a public figure, had suspended publication in 1910. Copies of it were piled against the wall. Dust was a half-inch thick on all the top copies. There were only two small bulbs to read by. Jimmy found a stool to sit on while he worked his way through issue after issue, looking for the names Linda Berry and Victor David. Except for lunch, when he met Jenny at the Varsity Cafe, he sat there all day. He wore a handkerchief, holdup man fashion, over his face to keep from breathing in the dust, and at night before dinner he soaked in the tub to get the dirt out of his pores. A week went by before he found anything about Linda Berry or Victor David. First he came upon a review of Linda Berry's performance in May, 1895 at the Lyceum.

The play was *The Girl with the Lavender Eyes.* Previously she had starred in *The Pretty Orphan, A Gay Girl* and *I'm a Friend of Mabel's.* There was a picture of her wearing white tights. She appeared to be tall and slender. Her dark hair was loose, falling over her shoulders in great profusion. Her head was bent and her index finger touched her right temple. She was smiling coyly. The caption read, "Girl with Lavender Eyes Bewitches Lyceum Audiences." Several issues later, there was a short article with the heading "Miss Berry May Star in Victor David Drama." The article said only that she had read the play written by the ex-senator, Victor David, and was taking the text to New York for further consideration.

Jimmy tried to imagine the sedate, tall, and heavy-set man carrying the play to her dressing room. Or had he used his connections to meet her in one of the large parlors in one of the great stone houses along McHenry Street, at that time the most elegant street in the city? She'd have arrived in a carriage, and her long dress would have swept the ground. But Jimmy's imagination refused to create the scene beyond this, and he went back to looking through later issues of the *Index-Journal.*

The Crest of the Wave opened in New York City in December, 1895. The *Index-Journal* had sent a correspondent to cover it. Mark Twain, William Dean Howells, and Diamond Jim Brady had been in the audience. The New York reviewers generally agreed that the play was worthy of Linda Berry's talents, and one of them reported that Senator David was writing another, to be called *The River Boat,* also for Miss Berry.

In February, 1896, Victor David and Linda Berry were married. She was thirty-one, and it was her fifth marriage. She was quoted as saying, "Dear Vic, he appeals to my need for stability." But she divorced him in June of the same year, announcing she would marry her leading man,

Alfred Hoare. Victor David had refused to make any statement for the press beyond saying he had destroyed the manuscript of *The River Boat* and was leaving New York City. One columnist described him as "disconsolate."

Jimmy spent most of his evenings with Jenny, usually drinking beer at the Varsity Cafe. Jenny was working toward an M.A. in English and was interested in Jimmy's research. Her fresh complexion and cheerful manner were always a relief after his dusty investigations in the *Index-Journal.* For the past several weeks they had talked endlessly about Victor David.

Jimmy had learned more about the second Mrs. David, that she had been dean of women, and that Victor David had been married to her less than a year when he killed himself. Jimmy had found a picture of her in the Archives, taken when she was about twenty-seven or twenty-eight. The face was plain, with thin lips, and the hair was drawn sharply back and presumably tied in a tight bun. He had described her to Jenny. "What sort of person do you suppose she is?"

Jenny answered, "She's an old lady. Therefore she's probably lonesome. She sews, and she has a cat. Why don't you go see her?"

"All I have to do is make an appointment. According to Tim Tate she's always wanted to see a thesis done on her husband."

"Go ahead and see her."

"I don't know. Reading a dead man's papers is one thing, but talking to his widow, especially when he obviously married her on the rebound, that's like sneaking a look at someone's letters when he leaves the room. It could be embarrassing."

"They married half a century ago. Probably she wants a thesis done as a kind of memorial, a piece of unfinished business she's always meant to clear up." Jenny smiled, showing her white strong teeth.

"Trouble is, I'd really like to see the old boy's diary. He probably kept one. I can't wholly make up my mind about him. I'd like to see if what he confided to his diary is different from his published work."

Jimmy wrote to Mrs. David, and within two days had an invitation to come to tea at four o'clock on Thursday. Two days later, before catching the bus that ran on River Boulevard, Jimmy stood in front of Victor David's statue. But the iron face revealed no secrets. During the ride he felt a little nervous.

The David house was on a high bluff overlooking the river, and to reach it Jimmy had to walk at least two hundred yards along a macadam road. The house and grounds were like the setting in many nineteenth-century novels. The doorbell was old and ulcerated, and Jimmy wondered whether it worked. But after he rang, the door was opened, and Mrs. David, a cane in her hand, gestured him in. A small black dog, apparently blind, stood next to her, breathing heavily. Mrs. David's hand was thin and cold, but her voice, as she greeted him, was firm and high-pitched.

She led Jimmy to a stiff chair. The dog followed her, keeping his nose close to the bottom of her long skirt. When she had sat down, the dog, still breathing heavily, stretched out in front of her. Mrs. David's high collar appeared to force her to hold her head up stiffly. She was a prim, rather striking old lady, and Jimmy sensed almost immediately that she was a woman of deep feelings, even passion. She had a quick, rapid way of speaking, and her memory for dates and the chronology of events in Victor David's life was better than his own. It was clear she had read everything her husband ever wrote. She began by telling him about a controversy her husband had had with Carlyle—Jimmy had not run this down. It was in an English periodical that had eluded David's bibliographer. She also told him, giving dates, of the discussions Victor

David had had with various eminent personages. All of it was interesting, and, in her telling, humanized and personalized. Listening to her, he began to get a clearer image and a fuller understanding of Victor David. She explained that her husband had a good pictorial sense. For a short time he had hoped to be a painter. And apparently he had been a man of strong appetites, proud of his masculinity. Mrs. David flushed slightly in describing how he had addressed her. "'Woman,' he'd say, 'Woman, get yourself over here,' or, 'Woman, it's time for us to go home.'"

Jimmy asked if the private language Victor David had used was similar to his public language. Mrs. David tinkled a small bell, looking at it as she did, trying to take in the implications of the question. A maid came in with a tray, put it down in front of her mistress and left. Mrs. David poured the tea into one cup and then into the other before saying, "Of course you are not asking if he made speeches in talking to me or to anyone else. My husband was a witty and often an ironic man. He did not play a public role with his intimates. Is that what you were asking?"

"Not precisely," Jimmy answered, accepting the extended cup and saucer. "Is the writing in his journal or diary, if he kept one, of the same character as his published writing?"

"He kept one," Mrs. David said sharply, "but you are not to see it. The diary is to be buried with me." More softly she added, "That's a Victorian gesture, but I believe my husband would want me to keep it with me, even in death."

"You have a right to protect your privacy," Jimmy said. "But may I ask to read *The Crest of the Wave*?"

Mrs. David looked sharply at him. "Then you are not writing about his work as a political theorist." Her hand shook as she lowered her cup to the saucer.

"I am writing about the man and the political theorist. Also about Victor David, the writer."

"I had hoped it would not include the play. *The Crest of the Wave* was popular in its day, but it was not his best work. Very well, you may take it with you."

Mrs. David rose, picked up her cane, and walked toward the study. The dog followed her. She gestured Jimmy to come also. There was an iron lion on the mantel and above it a large portrait of Victor David. Jimmy noticed that the lips were full. It was at once a sensuous and a strong mouth. Standing against the mantel was a gold-headed cane, and on a coat rack there was a gray tweed cap and a black derby. Mrs. David pointed at the two shelves that held Victor David's books and the magazines to which he had contributed.

"You may feel I am morbid to keep my husband's study just as it was. But I wanted it this way so that whoever wrote about him would be able to see it. He worked here every morning." Mrs. David patted the back of the chair at the desk. "Every morning, he sat here." Her eyes were bright and she smiled.

Jimmy inquired about Victor David's working habits, and finally asked whether he had written the play here. He was quite certain he hadn't.

"No," she said. "He wasn't living here at that time. We moved here when we married."

Mrs. David pulled open a drawer below the library shelves and took out a bound manuscript. "Here's the play," she said, handing it to him.

"Thank you very much," Jimmy said. "I'm afraid I've kept you too long."

"May I receive a copy of your thesis, Mr. West? I'd like to keep it here, with my husband's books."

"I'll be pleased to present you a copy," Jimmy said, moving toward the hall.

He put on his coat, and with hat in hand and the play

under his arm, he edged toward the door, anxious to leave. Mrs. David extended her hand, saying, "Don't judge me too harshly, Mr. West. You and I belong to different eras."

"I am grateful for your assistance," Jimmy said and they shook hands. As he started down the road he knew the old lady was watching him, and that the blind dog was standing next to her. He was glad he had not mentioned Linda Berry.

On the bus he began to read the play. He finished it in his room. It was not unlike Victor David's other work. The theme had to do with a man's being ready to act quickly and decisively in a crisis. To be ready he had truly to know himself. The protagonist was a painter, in love with a handsome young woman married to a cruel and besotted husband. Should he take her off to Paris? If he does, will he bring her only further pain and humiliation? He believes in his own talent and strength, and they run away together. They live chastely until the divorce is completed and then they marry. He works hard and is acclaimed as a great painter. They return to New York, where they live to a happy old age. The curtain falls on the scene of their golden anniversary.

That evening Jimmy told Jenny about his visit with Victor David's widow. He wasn't sure how he felt about the old lady, and certainly he was no closer to an understanding of Victor David. He suspected there was something overdone about their lives, as though they were living in a play. But Jenny was more sympathetic toward Mrs. David, observing that she had caused the one year of her marriage to elevate and to transform the rest of her life. In a way this was sad, but one had to admit that if she hadn't done it her life would have been very drab and empty.

"Yeah," Jimmy said, "but the fly in the ointment must

have been Linda Berry. Obviously he had not wanted to divorce her. His widow must know this."

"Yes, but she has had something Linda didn't have. She has had her memory of him for more than fifty years. She must see that as a triumph over her rival." Jenny laughed.

"You know, we're starting to talk like characters in a play ourselves."

The next afternoon, upon returning from the library, Jimmy found a special-delivery package from Mrs. David awaiting him. He tore it open on his way upstairs. The enclosed journal was a large one, with many entries. There was a letter attached. It read:

> Dear Mr. West,
>
> I have decided you should have a look at my husband's journal. I mentioned yesterday that you and I belong to different eras. I believe that if my husband were alive and had this decision to make he would allow you to read it. I'll appreciate your returning it at your earliest convenience.
>
> Very sincerely yours,
> Ellen (Mrs. Victor) David

Jimmy threw himself on the bed and opened the journal. It covered the last ten years of Victor David's life. He turned to 1897, marked by a tab. The first entry read: "'Victor, you have heard from Linda. You needn't try to hide it. I can always tell.' Poor, dear Ellen. Isn't it enough that Linda is a poison in my blood! Need I infect poor Ellen too?"

Jimmy closed the journal and rolled over on his back. There it was again, the characteristic Victor David rhetoric! Balancing the journal on his chest, he opened it again. The first word his eye saw was "Chloroform!" He went back to the beginning of the entry:

Linda has written again, saying she still loves me with her whole soul and being. Please, please for me to take the first train for New York. She is filled with desolation, and will count the minutes and the hours until she is in my arms once again. Why! why does Linda torment me! The only true love she knows is for that mysterious other self, half-preternatural, half-human that she becomes in walking from the wings, living for the hour on the stage, caught up in that world of candle and fancy, the theatre. Linda loves the power that can make me dance to her wicked tune. And yes, I would answer her Circe's song, knowing she intends me only harm. But I shan't humiliate Ellen. The resolution has been forming on the dark side of my mind. I shall admit it into the light. Chloroform! A handkerchief over the nose. There is no other way.

That was the final entry. Jimmy closed the journal. He had an uneasy feeling in his stomach. It was as though he had accidentally discovered something shocking about someone rather eminent whom he had known intimately but also formally. He was not at all sure he had had the right to pry into Victor David's personal life. He wondered what the old lady, Mrs. David, was feeling at this moment knowing that he, almost a total stranger, was probably reading the journal. For all she knew, he could be relishing what in his opinion was the inflated language and absurd rhetorical prose of Victor David at the point of suicide. Jimmy didn't feel this at all, but Mrs. David might suspect that he did. He turned his head and looked at Victor David's picture tacked on the wall. For the briefest instant the dark eyes seemed to be looking down at him, and Jimmy turned away. When he looked again he saw the eyes were looking at nothing at all.

Jimmy threw his legs over the side of the bed. He felt

the need of talking with Mr. Tate. He put a jacket on and, with the journal under his arm, hurried downstairs and toward the campus. The office door was ajar. Jimmy knocked lightly and went in. Mr. Tate looked up at him.

"I'd like to show you something," Jimmy said, and opened the journal to the final entry. He put it in front of Mr. Tate. Then he sat down.

Mr. Tate read the passage through, looked at Jimmy, then back at the page. When he looked up a second time, he handed the journal back to Jimmy. All he said was "Hmm!"

"It makes me uneasy," Jimmy said. "I tried to suggest to Mrs. David that I really had to see the journal if I was to do a good job on the thesis. Now I'm not at all sure I should have seen it."

"Hmm!" Mr. Tate said again. He took out a pack of cigarettes, shook it, and offered one to Jimmy. Mr. Tate took one for himself. He sighed almost imperceptibly as he reached into his coat pocket for his lighter. He snapped it and held the flame for Jimmy and then for himself. "Tell me," he asked, "what is it that makes you uneasy?"

"They were married less than a year, but Mrs. David has made a kind of cult out of his memory. In the journal he makes no bones about why he was killing himself. He did it for her but he also did it because he couldn't keep himself from going back to Linda Berry. Before now only Mrs. David has known this. Now I know it, and if I use it in the thesis others will know it."

Mr. Tate was studying Jimmy, and he continued to study him before he said, "Have you ever read the Bible?"

"A little," Jimmy answered, "when I used to go to Sunday School. What are you suggesting?"

"I'm suggesting that his death must have given her great pain. But also that he took his own life to avoid giving her even greater pain. Maybe he was wrong. At least she

knows he was trying to protect her. She may well have experienced what the Bible calls 'a fearful joy.' His love for her was greater than his love for Linda Berry. His suicide was the proof. If she has given her life to remembering him, she has sufficient reason."

Jimmy ran his right hand through his hair and said, "I think I see what you mean."

"And remember," Mr. Tate said "—she chose to give the journal to you."

"Yesterday she said I couldn't have it, but she sent it. I don't understand that."

"Maybe before she talked with you she was living in the nineteenth century. In giving it to you she moved into the present. It's possible. Whatever the reason, I daresay she's pleased she gave it to you."

"You know," Jimmy answered, "I've started to feel sort of schizophrenic myself. I wouldn't expect Jenny—that's my fiancée—to keep my books and papers if she were my widow, the way Mrs. David has. People don't do that any more. But for Mrs. David it was the right thing. It is as though I were living in my time, feeling my kind of feelings, and yet able to live in Victor David's time and understanding the way he felt."

Mr. Tate smiled. "Clio," he said, "Clio, the Muse of history, has reached out her hand and touched you. Be grateful."

"I'm grateful all right," Jimmy said. He stood up and put the journal under his arm. "Thanks," he added.

"Good luck with the thesis," Mr. Tate said, also getting up. "You shouldn't have any trouble winding it up now."

"Yes, I think I can," Jimmy said, "Good-by." He went out, walked down the stairs and out onto the campus. He walked toward Victor David's statue, intending to stop in front of it for a moment. The sun was shining and the light reflected from the statue's shoulders and the extended

left arm. But a young couple were standing in front of it, and the boy was leaning against Victor David's slightly extended right foot. Jimmy walked slowly past, casting a glance, almost of friendship or affection, upward at Victor David's face. Then he remembered that this afternoon Jenny was working in the English seminar room. Smiling to himself, he turned in the direction of the library.

The Professor's Daughter

In looking back, James and Mildred Wilson could see that the evening of the Johnsons' going away party had been the beginning of Hope's misfortunes. The Johnson house was a large white structure, with a wide expanse of lawn stretching from one side to the back. For the party, there were candles of various colors, gay Japanese lanterns strung on wires, and a number of glass chimes that tinkled in the mild summer wind. The Johnsons and their two daughters, Candace and Hope, saw to it that the guests mingled freely and were adequately supplied with punch, either spiked or plain, and with hors d'oeuvres. Candace and Hope were very close friends with Mary Jane Wilson. But Mary Jane and Bob Whitehead were still on their

honeymoon and therefore unable to attend. The evening was warm, and the light from the candles shone brilliantly on the green grass. It was the sort of gay and pleasant party one would have expected the Johnsons to give.

The Johnson family had lived down the street from the Wilson family for about fifteen years. William Johnson was an eminent figure in biochemistry and was frequently invited to address medical groups in various parts of the country. He and Mrs. Johnson were to spend the next two years in Beirut where he was to set up a science program in a new medical school. James Wilson, also a biochemist, but of less distinction than his colleague, fully acknowledged Bill Johnson's achievement and stature. Rose Johnson, a tall and pleasant woman, served in all sorts of useful organizations—fund raising for refugee children, legal aid for migrant workers, or rest homes for retired ministers and their wives. The Johnsons, seemingly devoid of malice and personal ambition, did whatever it was in their power to do for the common welfare. Their two daughters also radiated good will. It had been primarily through the children that the two families were associated.

Mary Jane and Hope had roomed together at Baird College, in a neighboring state. Candace had not gone to Baird. She had attended The Art Institute in Chicago and after graduation had taken a job in one of the city's art museums. Mary Jane and Hope had both majored in chemistry, and had announced their engagements during their senior year, Mary Jane to Bob Whitehead, a senior in medical school at Baird, and Hope to Bill Dawson, who already had his medical degree and had been doing further research work at Baird. Dawson planned to spend five years as a medical missionary in Burma. No one who knew Hope expressed the least surprise that she would give five years of her life to being the wife of a medical missionary in a village in some remote country.

Mary Jane and Hope had been home for the Christmas holidays, and their young men had visited them. Bob Whitehead was a down to earth young man, and he seemed right for Mary Jane. The Wilsons liked him. He had already lost most of his hair and by the time he reached thirty he would undoubtedly be roly-poly—but the Wilsons had long since reconciled themselves to the absence of physical beauty in their immediate family. Bill Dawson was tall, blond and quietly charming. He seemed ascetic, despite an occasional sardonic remark. He obviously enjoyed teasing Hope. It seemed proper that he and Hope would be going to Burma emanating good will and exhibiting their youthful charm. They were cast for such roles, just as Mary Jane and Bob Whitehead were cast for their more commonplace ones. The two girls and their young men made a cheerful and pleasant foursome. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson felt unusually happy watching them on their first night at home go down their front walk and pile into Dawson's car.

Mary Jane and Bob were married in June, shortly after graduation exercises. Candace and Hope were bridesmaids. Bob had an internship in a Chicago hospital and Mary Jane hoped to get a job as a lab technician, thereby helping to support them until Bob could set up practice. They would live in an apartment Candace had located for them. Bill Dawson, anxious to begin his medical career, had already flown to Burma, and Hope planned to join him in the fall. But this was not to be, at least not in the near future.

James Wilson, the evening of the party, had observed a slight change in Candace. She seemed more sophisticated, more enameled than when she had been living at home. She was also thinner. A young man named Homer Chesman had joined her for the party. He also lived in Chicago and was a composer. His mustache was a thin, narrow line that must have required extreme care. Candace seemed

half-annoyed, and yet detached in her relationship with him. It occurred to James Wilson that their earlier relationship might have been of a different sort—and that Candace recently had chalked Homer Chesman up to experience.

Homer Chesman was what James Wilson's generation had called a matinee idol type. He was also somewhat satyrish in appearance—one eyebrow pointed out and upwards. One could assume, after listening to Chesman for a few moments, that he was quite capable of entertaining an audience for a half hour while they awaited a famous singer or a pianist or speaker unavoidably detained. His manner made sport of everything indiscriminately. James Wilson recognized that if one was susceptible to the type, Homer Chesman was undoubtedly a charmer.

About eleven o'clock, Mr. Wilson happened to be sitting in a canvas sling chair, sipping a glass of punch and not paying much attention to anyone. He had quietly disengaged himself from a small group fervently discussing American foreign policy. He could see his wife Mildred standing just inside the door of the glassed-in back porch, talking in an animated way to someone out of his range of vision. Another group was sitting on the grass behind him, a few yards away. Homer Chesman was entertaining them. Wilson heard him telling an anecdote about a Chicago couple named Harry and Vivian Brown. "They met," Chesman said, "at a weekend party in the country. Harry and Vivian found that their libidos pulled in an interesting tension, and they soon found themselves down behind a shed in a pile of newcut hay. Oh, la la la and do do do. Vivian, bless her curvaceous and lovely bottom, uttered a high soprano sound of utter satisfaction. Their mating in the warm hay was gloriously satisfactory, gloriously satisfactory," he added, turning the phrase into a kind of music.

James Wilson could imagine the gestures Chesman used

in delivering his sentence. There was a reedy quality to Chesman's voice, and Wilson disliked it almost unreasonably. But he was also fascinated. He heard him go on to say that Harry Brown was delighted with this spontaneous creature, and before an hour had passed he asked to marry her. That was over a year ago, and their marriage, so far as he knew, Homer Chesman said, was still giving "so-o-opreme satisfaction."

There was whispering and murmuring in the group, but no one commented aloud on Chesman's story. Without pausing, he began another about a masculine, or dominant, homosexual who terrified his boy friend not merely into supporting him but also into supporting a second friend. The masculine fairy was running a *ménage à trois!* Homer's audience tittered, either in enjoyment or uneasiness. As Chesman began to tell about the "family" in more detail, James Wilson got up and without turning toward the group went in search of Mildred, who had left the sun-porch. He found her at the side of the house, talking with the senior Johnsons and with Candace.

James Wilson thanked the Johnsons for the pleasant party, and Mildred added that they wanted Candace and Hope to think of the Wilson house as home while their parents were abroad. The Johnsons thanked them warmly, and Candace said she always did think of their house as her second home. They shook hands all around. James Wilson said they would like to say good night to Hope too. Candace turned her head toward the backyard, then said, "She's out there being hypnotized by that wolf in seersucker clothing, Homer Chesman." Candace's eyes were rather hard as she spoke, but as she turned and looked at the Wilsons her face softened and she said she'd say good night to Hope for them.

The Wilsons walked home. The moon was full, causing the new leaves to dance in shadows on the grass and

sidewalks. They talked a little about Hope, especially about her going all the way out to Burma for five years. James Wilson discovered that his wife had not been especially aware of Homer Chesman. He found himself hoping that Candace's comment did not mean that Hope was seriously attracted toward him. Somehow he felt uneasy about it, but he kept his fears to himself, and talked to his wife only about the warm summer air and the courage of the senior Johnsons in going off to a foreign country for two whole years. Mildred Wilson admitted that the Johnsons' sense of dedication was great but, she said, after a pause, they ought to have a little more selfishness. "At least," she added with a slight laugh, "one could feel a little closer to them if they were just a wee bit selfish." James Wilson grunted, partly in agreement, partly in surprise at such an observation from his wife.

In mid-July, Hope went to Chicago. She had come to the Wilson house and bade them an affectionate farewell. Her intention was to fly directly from Chicago to Burma. The Wilsons were sad to see her go but pleased that she had an exciting five years ahead of her. In August, the senior Johnsons sailed for Beirut.

Each of Mary Jane's weekly letters from Chicago had a comment on Hope's visit, but no word about her plans. Then there was a letter saying that poor Hope had fallen head over heels in love with Homer Chesman. Candace and she and even Bob had tried to talk her out of it, but Hope, sweet as ever, said she loved him. Mary Jane told her parents that Chesman didn't work very hard at his music and probably had no real future. Worse than that, he had a pretty bad reputation. No one who knew him really trusted him. As though in an effort to be cheerful, Mary Jane added a postscript saying she had heard that snakes could mesmerize rabbits.

The Wilsons were very distressed by this news, and

Mildred Wilson said to her husband that Hope's parents ought to be where they could help their daughter when she needed them and not off some place trying to shed enlightenment. But she was partly ashamed of having said this and added that she supposed Hope had to get through the affair on her own. After all, Hope was a grown woman and she ought to be able to cope with the likes of Homer Chesman.

Mary Jane and Bob came home for the Christmas holidays. Both of them were getting along well in their jobs, and they seemed quite happy together. At first Hope's name was carefully excluded from the conversations, but concern and curiosity on the part of the senior Wilsons broke through and they asked for news of her. All four had been sitting in the study, in front of the fireplace, sipping Tom and Jerrys from old coffee mugs that had been in the family for years. "Aren't you going to tell us about Hope?" Mildred Wilson asked. "Yes, how is she?" her husband added.

Mary Jane put her cup down on her father's desk and looked at Bob, as though asking him how much she should tell. "Go ahead," Bob said, "you can't keep these matters secret."

"Well," Mary Jane said, "she's been living with Homer. In an awful walk-up apartment. He has an old piano that he plays about once a week. Hope has a job." In response to an inquiring look from her mother, she said, "Yes, she's supporting him."

"How does he treat her?" James Wilson asked.

"Awful," Mary Jane said. "He runs around from party to party every night. Sometimes he takes her, sometimes not. He's a great Romeo. What I don't understand is that a lot of women are willing to play around with him. You wouldn't believe it, but he has even called me, close as I am to Hope and despite my being married. The first time he phoned I

went over and told Hope. I said he was a louse, and that she ought to leave him. All she did was cry."

"What about Candace?" Mildred asked.

"She's tried. Candace has changed some. She's tougher than she used to be. Homer Chesman was part of her education. She told Hope all about it. I'm sure it wasn't an easy thing to do. But nothing seems to work. It is as though Hope were in a dream, walking toward the edge of a cliff and not being able to stop. I don't see how anyone could love Homer Chesman. He's loathesome!" Mary Jane shuddered as she said it.

"Maybe Hope will get over it," Mildred Wilson said. "She might even go out to Burma and marry that nice Dawson boy."

"She's in pretty far," Bob Whitehead said.

"What do you mean?" James Wilson asked.

"He means she's pregnant," Mary Jane answered.

Nothing more was said about Hope during the remainder of the visit, but she was very much in all of their minds. When Mary Jane began to write again from Chicago she invariably told them about Hope. From the beginning Hope had been sick. She had been hospitalized twice. The Wilsons found themselves hoping she would lose the child, but on both occasions the doctor released her as apparently better.

It was soon clear that Homer Chesman had no intention of marrying Hope. According to Mary Jane, Hope made excuses for him, that marriage would interfere with his career, and that he couldn't afford to support her and a child. When she was well Hope worked and supported Chesman. When she was not well, Candace gave them money. According to Mary Jane, Candace had developed a very acid humor. She said things to Chesman that hardly anyone, even a person like him, would suffer. But he

seemed satisfied to remind her that she had not always had such a low opinion of him. Candace had told Mary Jane that she did not think of Homer Chesman as a person, she thought of him as a serious infection, as a disease in the blood that had to be carried until one had developed antibodies to throw off the infection and resist later infection. Candace was kind and sympathetic with Hope.

In spring the situation worsened. Hope developed neuralgia and was obliged to have her upper and lower front teeth removed. When Mildred Wilson read this to her husband she began to cry, and he put his arms around her. He could not bring himself to take the letter from her hand and finish it.

Mary Jane had said several times that Chesman was mean to Hope and openly taunted her about other women he was seeing. Once he had struck her, bruising her right cheekbone. Even worse, almost, was Hope's following him when he went out at night to a party or to see another woman. The Wilsons could not understand why she was willing to subject herself to the humiliating and degrading scenes which must have followed upon her finding him. Almost any other young woman they knew would have left Chesman, or would have fought him on his terms or on her own; she would have made it a contest in which there was at least a possibility of defeating him—but the Wilsons could not imagine sweet-tempered Hope injuring anyone, not even such a person as Homer Chesman. They could foresee no solution.

No one could have been prepared for what actually happened. Mary Jane phoned at about one thirty on a Friday morning. She wanted her parents, or at least her father, to come to Chicago right away. Hope would need them, and so would she. She was too upset to explain exactly what had happened, and her father had asked to speak to Bob. Bob began by saying that Homer Chesman

had been killed and that Hope was at the hospital in a state of shock. For a terrible moment James Wilson thought that Hope had killed him, and he asked if she had. "No, no," Bob said, "it was an accident, a horrible accident." He explained that Homer had gone to a party, on the sixth floor of an old building. About eleven o'clock Hope had gone out after him. She climbed to the sixth floor, sat on the stairs and waited. Homer was quite drunk when he had come out onto the landing and he demanded that she go home. Hope was crying. Homer, taking hold of the railing with his right hand to steady himself, aimed a kick at her—but the railing gave way, and he fell all the way down the stairwell. His neck was broken and his skull badly crushed. Hope went into shock and had to be taken to a hospital, where she was under sedation.

James Wilson told Bob that he would come as soon as possible. Bob thanked him and hung up. Mildred Wilson was dressed in a wrapper and sitting on the sofa. Finally she had said, "I'll fix you some breakfast, dear." When she brought coffee to her husband and he sat sipping it, she said, "It is a good thing. He was an awful person, and at least he's dead."

The trip to Chicago took almost eight hours of steady driving, most of it in the quiet, dead hours of the morning when for miles at a time no other car was in sight. Small towns slid past, and there were occasional patches of fog in the green, spring fields. James Wilson felt a little numb. He had no clear notion why he was going to Chicago, or what he expected to do there. Mildred had said that Hope might be willing to come home with him. He intended to invite her, but he wouldn't insist on it. Hope had involved herself with the sort of person who was the very opposite of everything her parents represented—and they must assume they had never understood Hope. Possibly she did not understand herself either.

Once in Chicago, he drove directly to the hospital, St. Mark's. The clerk at the main desk gave him a room number on the seventh floor. On that floor he investigated two corridors before he found the right room. The door was open and he went in.

Hope was breathing heavily, her head tilted awkwardly at the edge of the pillow and her right arm hanging loosely over the side of the bed. He took hold of her arm to lift it back onto the bed. The wrist was of a birdlike thinness, and the flesh was moist and hot. Probably she had a high temperature. Her mouth was partly open and he saw that the front teeth were false. Her eyes were tightly closed. The bed clothes were humped, indicating the child she was carrying. Her face and upper body were thin and drawn. James Wilson put his hand over his eyes. Then he sought a chair and sat down.

Probably he had been there for forty-five minutes when a nurse, a gray-haired woman with gold-rimmed glasses, came in.

"Oh," she said, "you must be the father of the other young lady."

"You mean Mrs. Whitehead?"

"Yes, that's it, Mrs. Whitehead. Your daughter asked that you go to their apartment. They left an hour or so ago."

"How is she, how is Hope?"

"She's a very sick girl, and she'll be lucky if she doesn't lose that baby. I believe she's been sick all through the pregnancy—and then the shock of this accident. You can see how thin she is." The nurse looked at Hope with a detached sympathy. Then she pulled the sheet up until it covered Hope's left shoulder. "We'll do our best for her," she added. "And you come back, later on, after you've rested. You look a bit wan yourself."

James Wilson thanked her and left.

Mary Jane and Bob lived near the University of Chicago,

in a neighborhood he knew. He found their street easily, and the old brownstone Mary Jane had several times described in her letters. Bob opened the door for him and they shook hands. Taking the suitcase, Bob put it on the floor. Mary Jane, who was standing with a dirty dishcloth in her hand, let out a little cry and came toward him. "Oh, Daddy, it's so awful," she said, putting her arms around him.

"Yes, dear," he said, "it is."

Mary Jane showed him the room he was to have. It was the only bedroom. She and Bob, she said, would use the daybed in the living room. The faded walls of the bedroom were a kind of pale mustard and the window was dirty with soot and grime. "Daddy," Mary Jane said, "you look pretty tired. Lie down for a while. Bob and I are to meet Candace at the hospital in an hour. You rest, at least until this evening."

Ordinarily, James Wilson rarely lay down during the afternoon, but he admitted to being tired, and after his daughter went out, closing the door after her, he took his shoes off and lay down. For a few minutes he heard dishes and pots being put away, a faucet being turned on and off, doors opening and closing, and the murmur of Mary Jane and Bob talking. Then he slept.

James Wilson was awakened by voices. Darkness had fallen, and obviously he had been asleep several hours or more. He put his shoes on, and went into the living room. Candace was sitting next to Mary Jane on the sofa, and Bob, a drink in his hand, was in the kitchen doorway. As Candace got up to greet him she began to cry. James Wilson patted her arm gently and told her to sit down. "Is Hope worse?" he asked Mary Jane.

"Daddy," she answered, biting her lower lip, "they took the baby. It was a boy, but he's dead. Hope has uremic poisoning. Her fever is very high." He asked if the doctor

was fearful about her condition, and Mary Jane said she did not think so. He told Candace he'd be glad to come back in a week, or whenever Hope was well enough to go, and take her home for her convalescence. Candace said that Hope would like that.

The next morning James Wilson drove home. During the following two weeks Mildred Wilson busied herself getting a bedroom ready, cleaning glassware and silverware, waxing floors and polishing chairs and tables until everything shone.

On Wednesday evening of the second week Mary Jane phoned and told her father that Hope would probably be released on Saturday, and she wanted to spend the next few weeks with them if they were sure she wouldn't be a burden. James Wilson told Mary Jane to assure Hope that everything was in readiness for her and that they'd be very pleased to have her. He would drive down on Friday afternoon, spend the night with them, if that was all right, and bring Hope back on Saturday. Mary Jane said that would be fine—they would look forward to seeing him, and please to give her mother a hug for her. James Wilson told his wife that Mary Jane seemed rather cheerful, all things considered.

At eight o'clock Saturday morning James Wilson, accompanied by Candace, Mary Jane and Bob, drove into the little parking lot at the rear of the hospital. Hope, who had been expecting them, was sitting on a wooden bench on the concrete porch. As they got out of the car she waved and went down the stairs to meet them. She put her suitcase on the ground and embraced them. James Wilson saw that the skin was very tight over her cheekbones. She wore almost no makeup. He picked up the suitcase and carried it toward the car, and the four young people followed him. James Wilson felt older than he ever had felt before. He found, as they drove toward the apartment,

that he wasn't listening to the conversation. He was thinking to himself that he could understand the sufferings of older people; it was somehow a part of getting ready to be dead, but one hated to see young people suffer. Fate or nature or whatever seemed not to be giving them a sufficient chance to enjoy themselves. Candace, Mary Jane and Bob got out at the apartment, and Hope moved to the front seat for the long drive home. The farewells were quiet and somehow sad, and James Wilson was glad when they were over and the car had pulled away from the three young people on the sidewalk.

They were about seventy or eighty miles out of the city before either of them spoke. Hope said, "Please don't feel unhappy about me, Mr. Wilson, please don't." James Wilson turned toward her, smiling. "I'll try not to, but you have had a hard time."

Hope's coat had a large arching collar and her head and face, set against it, seemed very fragile, as though she might never again be strong. For another few minutes nothing more was said. Then Hope spoke. "I was never that sick before." As a kind of afterthought, she added, "Were you ever that sick?" "No," he said, "I don't suppose I ever have been. Is it pretty bad?"

Hope said, "I am trying to remember something that I was thinking about during the fever. It is hard to put into words."

"We think a lot of strange things when we are sick," James Wilson said.

"I guess so," Hope said. "But what I'm trying to say is that one can enjoy a sickness. It seems very curious to say so, but I enjoyed it, the sensation of burning up, of being consumed by the fever. All of the awful things that had happened, the way we were living, Homer's accident, losing the baby, they were somehow in that fire and when it was over I felt relieved. I could breathe again."

"You had a high fever," James Wilson said.

"Yes," she answered, "but the months before were a kind of sickness too. Homer was as bad as everyone said."

"Why did you stay with him? You could have left."

"Mr. Wilson," she said, turning toward him, "do you believe a part of our mind is seeking oblivion?"

James Wilson paused, watching the white line down the middle of the highway. A truck rumbled past them. Finally he answered, "Yes, I believe that."

"Do you also believe that something in us sometimes wants to be pulled down into filth, into the drains that carry off the sewage? Some men have to get very drunk once in a while. Others have to lie to themselves, to imagine all sorts of hateful and untrue things about their wives or husbands or colleagues. It is the way we are. Bill Dawson used to tell me that. I didn't believe him. When I met Homer Chesman I knew it was true. For the first time I knew it was true."

"Is it still true?" James Wilson asked softly.

"Not in the same way," Hope said.

"What about Bill Dawson?" James Wilson asked. "Is that all over?"

"I don't know. I wrote him about Homer and the baby. He was very angry, but he continued to write to me, and to Candace about me."

"He seemed like a nice fellow."

Hope nodded her agreement, then said, "I find it hard to believe now, but last year I sometimes thought Bill Dawson was rather cynical."

"Why did you think that?"

"He joked a lot about carrying the white man's burden, and giving five years of his life so he could come back a hero. He said he planned on having a big medical practice among fat churchgoing women."

"Now you think he was joking."

"No, I don't. He had to make a joke about being a hero and making money because both might come true. But he was also giving five years of his life. I think he saw those five years as balancing the rest."

When James Wilson finally answered, he said, "My dear child, you learned something in that hospital, didn't you?"

Hope turned her head toward him, her large light blue eyes, still sad, shining above her drawn cheekbones. "Don't forget," she said, "I am a professor's daughter." Then she smiled, and James Wilson saw it was the same affectionate smile that everyone who had loved her had long known.

Nick, the . . .

Darkness was beginning to fall as Martha Chandler came out of the liquor store and walked toward her six-year-old car. She held the paper bag containing two bottles close to her side, a little furtively. One part of her mind said it was quite all right to drink. Most of the intelligent people she knew did, and she was prepared to defend their and her right to do so. Even so, buying whiskey or carrying it always disturbed her conscience.

She got into the car from the street side, slid the package over and started the motor. Sometimes it took several minutes for the motor to catch, but this time it started immediately and she pulled out into a line of cars and headed for home.

On second thought, she decided, she'd better stop by the hospital to say hello to her mother. When she had been there earlier, her mother had been sleeping.

Martha turned left and drove along the river, and then right onto one of the diagonal roads that helped form an X on the campus. On the far side of the campus, she turned left again. The street led both to the campus and to the river, but at this end there was the hospital and a small shopping center. There was an empty parking place in front of the hospital, and she pulled into it. She put the package on the floor, pushing it under the seat and out of sight.

Waiting for the old elevator to appear through the iron grating, Martha was reminded of her uneasiness in hospitals. The smell of medicines and steam-cooked food bothered her. Hospitals meant suffering and unhappiness. She hoped her mother would be released soon and could not help feeling relieved that she and Don were young. The elevator appeared, the door clanked open, and she stepped in.

Martha's mother was awake. She was looking out the window at the shimmering leaves of a large oak tree. Martha went in quietly and touched her arm.

"Hello, Mother."

"Oh, it's you, Martha dear." Her eyes were smiling but the skin under them was dark and her cheeks were drawn. "What have you been doing?"

"Shopping a little." Martha sat down at the foot of the bed.

"For what? What did you get?"

"Liquor, if you must know. I've been feeling a little guilty all the way here."

Her mother smiled, and reached over and patted her hand.

"You and Don can stand a little fun. He works hard, studying and teaching. A little party won't hurt you any."

"That's not all of it, sweetie-pie. We're having Nick over too."

"That wild man! Well, I hope the house is built solidly enough to hold him for an evening."

"You don't mind then. Will Oscar mind? He won't, will he?"

"Of course not, Martha. He wants you and Don to enjoy yourselves. He's told you any number of times that while you and Don are with us it's your house too. He means it. You know that."

"Yes, I know he does, Mother. He's been very good to us. But you know he thinks Nick is out to destroy himself."

"Maybe the young man is. He's a strange one."

"Yes, he is. Anyhow, what does the doctor say about you? Any word yet?"

"Not yet. I had a swimming head this morning. I'll talk with the doctor tonight. Or perhaps Oscar will. But listen, dear, you'd better be getting on home if you're having a party. Have a good time."

Martha got up, leaned over and kissed her mother.

"Thanks. I hope Oscar will bring us good news about you."

"Don't worry. Run along now."

"Bye-bye, Mother."

Martha drove slowly through the campus. The twilight accented the new green of this time of year. She turned left into Allen Street and stopped in front of the house, a white bungalow, with a wide expanse of lawn in front and a well-kept garden in back. Oscar worked dutifully to keep it nice. She and Don had been happy here, but she looked forward to the June, two years hence, when Don would have his degree and they could head out into the big world, wherever it might beckon.

Martha opened the back door, put the bottles on the

kitchen table, and went into the living room to take off her coat. The room needed no straightening, and she sat down to await Don and Nick. Don had asked her to drive to town for the whiskey because he had left a book at the office which he had to return to the library—someone needed it. That was Don. If someone needed a book, he returned it. But he was not self-righteous. He liked to have fun and he was tolerant. At least up to a point. With Nick it was hard to know where one had to draw the line.

They had met Nick at Mr. Pomfret's cocktail party for his staff and the new instructors. That had been only nine months ago and since then Nick had become a part of their lives. That day he had worn a thin shoestring bow tie. Nick was handsome in his swashbuckling, swaggering way. He had exerted himself to be charming, and he could be charming. He had been drunk at the party. He had sat foursquare not seeming to know or care where he was. Mr. and Mrs. Pomfret tried to avoid looking at him, and Mr. Pomfret had asked Don to take Mr. Remy to his room at the faculty club. They had taken him out as unobstrusively as possible.

During the ride Nick asked if they knew where Nora was. Where was she? "Nora?" they had asked, "Who is Nora?" "That's my wife, that's who Nora is." They hadn't known he was married. Was she with him? No, no, he hadn't brought her. Then he had thrown his head back, like a drunk rising out of sleep. "You have a wife and don't have her. That's pretty goddam smart, ain't it?"

They had got him to his room, or Don had. And that wasn't the only time Don, or a friend of theirs, had steered Nick into the faculty club as quietly as possible. From that first night at the Pomfrets Martha had wondered what it was that tormented Nick so. And she wondered about Nora. She couldn't understand why a young wife would willingly

be separated from her husband. Obviously it didn't do Nick any good to be living alone. It just left him free to get into trouble.

Don Chandler was on his way across campus to the library. He had just seen Nick in their office. As usual by this time of day, Nick was drunk.

He felt he understood Nick fairly well. At least he knew the way Nick's fancies allowed him to balloon up above the commonplace reality in which the rest of them lived, or lived most of the time. Probably Nick's green bow tie had been his trapeze all day. Up there above the faces in the circus tent, all looking up at him. Swinging back and forth, back and forth, hanging by one hand, by an ankle strapped to the bar—should he thumb his nose at them? This would be because of his brother Jack. *Don, did I ever tell you about Jack? Well, let me tell you again. We're each other's favorite brother. Joseph and Miles seemed to be the sane ones. They never knew how to take us. Jack in the circus, me an aspiring scholar. When we used to get together we'd have a hell of a time. That literal-minded son of a bitch Joseph always said, Cut it, vaudeville's better! You're embarrassing my wife. What a wife, pure lard! Miles was the quiet one, and when he said something you'd carry it in your groin like a fine blade out of merry Spain. Then he up and killed himself. Took a room, drank something, and was dead. Miles always said Ma and Pa were the reason Jack and I are nuts. Did I ever tell you what the corner grocer said about my old man? Let me tell you again. That old man of yours, he'd fight a buzz saw and it going. Out hunting once with Cousin George, Pa was caught in a sudden snow. They got lost and Cousin wanted to lie down, but Pa wouldn't let him. The temperature dropped and it was freezing cold. Pa cut a heavy*

switch and whipped Cousin George whenever he tried to stop. None of the relatives ever did forgive Pa for the welts on Cousin. Ma never did either, although it wasn't her cousin, it was Pa's. She never forgave him for anything. She'd sit there not admitting he was breathing or living. One day he just crumpled and died. I remember when I showed her my diploma. If you ever find a big grease spot on the wall it would do to cover it up, she said, and when I asked whether she'd like to meet Nora, she said, Boy, I would not.

Don found the campus pleasant in the early evening. The arc lights on several of the roofs crisscrossed their beams, one of them passing over the hospital where Helen was having a checkup. Oscar had said he'd spend the evening with her.

Nick had complicated things tonight by inviting Eva, and then asking Don to pick her up for him. Nick's gall! Nick's fancying librarians was part of his war with respectability. First it was Miss Linkson. Now it was Eva.

Gwendolyn Linkson talked in quiet whispers, and she was settling into statuesque fat. About twenty-five, she was already middle-aged. Nick's manners included no deference to women because they were women and Miss Linkson, her skin pink with excitement, was pleasantly horrified by his deliberate attacks on the proprieties. Don's acquaintance with her had been barely of the nodding kind, but when Nick suggested the three of them lunch together, he had felt obliged to say yes. Regularly Nick left the office early in the afternoon to go to a neighboring beer joint. Don always declined to join him. Going to lunch was a way of placating him.

Nick had been laying steady siege to Miss Linkson's virtue for several weeks. Don had been briefed prior to the luncheon. *The lady has quite a frame, but it is corseted up to here!* and Nick drew his finger across his Adam's apple.

This meant she hadn't yet capitulated. That she was having lunch with him suggested she hadn't threatened to have her brother, if any, run Nick out of town. She was still listening.

In Don's presence, at least, she was much concerned to carry on a polite conversation. Occasionally she glanced at Nick a little apprehensively, but he seemed, for him, innocent enough. Two or three times he wore a slight smirk, but he devoted himself to eating, a steady preoccupation of his, and Don carried on with the amenities.

Thanking the waitress, one of the undergraduates who worked in the club at noontime, for bringing him a lettuce salad, Nick asked her if she knew the value of lettuce.

"Rabbits like lettuce. Know why?"

"No, Mr. Remy. I don't think I ever thought about it."

"It's got fertility vitamins in it. That's why rabbits think about lettuce."

The young lady smiled ambiguously and asked if they were having a second cup of coffee. Miss Linkson looked relieved when the waitress turned in the direction of the large metal urn that gleamed at the far end of the dining room. Nick studied her legs moving rhythmically beneath the yellow linen smock. Then he looked directly at Miss Linkson, who was sipping the last of her coffee. That something was coming was evident from the way he fixed his eyes on her, letting them range over the part of her body that was in evidence above the edge of the table. Then he looked toward Chandler, as if to remind her he was there, and turning back to her quoted from Marvell:

> Then worms shall try
> That long preserved virginity,
> And your quaint honor turn to dust,
> And into ashes all my lust.

Nick went back to eating his lettuce. Miss Linkson was crimson, the red splotches at the back of her neck spreading,

flooding every cell in her neck, face and ears. Her hands trembled, but she put the cup back neatly into its saucer. Not looking at either of them, she rose and hurried, half-running, out of the room.

"Nick, why in God's name?"

"I had to. Picked the wrong one that time. Even if I won I'd lose. Things had gone too far not to have some break, clean and final. That was it. And consider the delicacy of my leave-taking, quoting her poetry!"

"You are a thoroughgoing bastard. I hope she reports you."

"She won't. She'll avoid you as much as possible and she'll cut me cold. That's all."

Nick had been right. Miss Linkson and he found it convenient to turn down hallways, to cross streets, or to be so preoccupied with something that they had no occasion to greet each other.

The light gleamed on the long oak tables of the reference room. Eva was at the center desk reading a magazine. Her round face was intent, and her glasses made it seem even more round.

"Hello, Miss Dobbsley."

"Oh, Mr. Chandler. It's you."

"Nick said you'd be through work shortly and might want to walk to the house with me. He'll join us there."

Eva removed her glasses and smiled at him as she came around to the front of the desk.

"That's very nice of you. It's after eight and I'm through now."

They walked out into the foyer, down the heavy granite stairs, past the closed door of the librarian's office, and out the main entrance. Eva breathed deeply.

"It's a nice night, isn't it? You can smell the grass."

Eva took his arm and he turned toward her, smiling.

"The men were cutting it late this afternoon." Don felt very sorry for Eva.

Eva had had time and occasion enough to know that a friend of Nick's paid for the privilege. Tonight was the same. It was obvious Martha had not expected her, and his letting Don Chandler pick her up! Nick was in one of his nasty moods. Making jibes about a member of someone's family right in their own living room. Dr. McCallum was nothing to her. She found him strict and prissy, but if she were in Martha's place, she certainly wouldn't work so hard at being polite. Too many people were polite with Nick. His leg was over the side of the chair. Right at home he was.

"Tell me now, tell me what he's got now he's a full professor. You both know it's a disease, this ladder climbing. A disease. Of which Oscar is the chief example of which!"

Eva studied Nick. This was an old talking point of his. He knew Oscar disapproved of him and didn't like Don and Martha seeing him. Well, if Martha wasn't going to stop him, she would. At least she'd try.

"Tell me, Nick dear, wouldn't you like to be an assistant professor?"

Nick turned to look at her, lids heavy and a sneer forming, but he would answer her, his not-very-bright Eva.

"Not if I could get a job standing on my thumbs as a circus performer! Like me brother Jack. The trouble is, one of my thumbs ain't very strong."

Nick smiled slightly, approving his own wit. He swung around, facing Don.

"What do you think, old chum?"

Don had been quiet, letting Martha defend Oscar. He shrugged, as though he were saying there was no point in trying to explain anything to Nick.

"You know as much as I do about Oscar. He didn't finish college until he was twenty-five. He didn't get his Ph.D. until just before he married Martha's mother. It's been a long, hard pull. He doesn't like nonsense but he's very kind and generous with us. Basically he's a decent guy. You know all this."

Martha drew her skirt more tightly over her knees. She was looking at her husband approvingly.

Nick threw his head back and put the other leg over the arm of the chair. He studied his glass, then finished it in one long swallow. He pulled himself up and went over to the coffee table in front of Martha and poured himself another drink.

Eva watched. No water, just an ice cube in a double shot. Nick formed a smile for Eva, and bowed.

"You don't want me to be unhappy, Eva dear, do you now?"

Eva could answer that one. "Not too happy, Nicky boy."

Martha waited until Nick sat down again.

"Oscar has had a hard time. He worked as a gardener, a handy man, anything he could get. In his spare time he studied and went to school. Finally he saved enough money to go to the state university. He worked very hard. He's a good scholar. He's earned his professorship."

"The poor fellow, he had to work."

"Yes, he did. He even taught in a country school. He did graduate work in the summers. He always had side jobs. After years of that sort of thing, he got an instructorship here."

"Success at last! This is for Oscar." Nick raised his glass, then drank from it.

Martha got up and walked toward the mantel. "Let me show you a picture of the young Oscar."

She held it in front of him, but Eva saw he concentrated his attention on Martha's bosom. Martha pulled away slightly.

"Here, look, Nick. See how thin he was. Just look."

"Oh, the hell with Oscar."

The corners of Nick's mouth were down, a weather signal that he could say something very ugly. Eva had seen him this way all too often. But there was Martha to consider —Eva stood up.

"Martha dear, which way do the arrows point to the rest room?"

"Upstairs, Eva, first door to the right."

At the foot of the stairs, Eva waited a moment to hear whether Nick would keep it up or change the subject. . . . He began to talk about her. She wasn't surprised. Other people's feelings were nothing to him. She could hear him say that a philanderer should always pick an unattractive but sexy lassie. *Like Eva!* he said.

It was Don who answered him, coldly. "Shut up, Nick. For your own sake, just shut up."

Eva breathed deeply, shuddered, and went quietly up the stairs. She flushed the toilet, turned a faucet on and off, and looked at herself in the mirror. Nick was right. No one could claim she was pretty. She went slowly down the stairs and paused in the hallway. Martha was telling Nick that her mother was in the hospital for a checkup. Eva entered the room and returned to her chair where she sat sipping her drink and waited for her anger to subside. When she no longer felt her voice might betray her feelings she turned to Don.

"We seem to be getting along with our drinking."

"Saturday night, Eva! And Nick has just said this is our year to be emancipated. Right, Nick?"

"Right nothing, old boy. Emancipation, my ass. You and Oscar like the system, the impersonal, proper, fair-minded system! And you like it!"

Nick was very drunk. He stood up and threw his glass into the fireplace. Eva could see that throwing the glass changed his mood. He was no longer angry. Moods came and went in Nick like clouds on a gray day. Eva walked over to the piano.

"Nick, sing *Sam Hall.* I'll play for you."

Martha, shaking her head said she'd better make some coffee. She went into the kitchen. Nick sat down again.

Don helped Nick up, and leaning heavily on him, Nick lurched toward the brightly polished piano near the street window. Don, his face white, sat down on the edge of a chair. Eva knew he would willingly have throttled Nick. Nick had been insufferable. And now he would entertain them! As Martha re-entered, Nick pointed a finger at her and began:

I seen Molly in the crowd, in the crowd
I seen Molly in the crowd, in the crowd
And I said, Molly, ain'tcha proud? I said
God damn your eyes.

The doorbell rang softly, and the door opened. It was Dr. McCallum. He had the afternoon paper under his arm. Nick grimaced, and then smiled idiotically:

So, it's up the rope I go, up I go
So, it's up the rope I go, up I go
And the crowd down there below
God damn their eyes.

Dr. McCallum stood just inside the door, bewildered, not knowing what to do. Nick, probably too drunk to know who it was, tried to point his finger at him:

Oh, my name it is Sam Hall, is Sam Hall
And I hate you one and all
God damn your eyes.

Finishing the last line, Nick slid down the wall and sat on the floor. Eva felt it was all like something rehearsed. She looked at Dr. McCallum who still didn't know what to do. As for Martha, she didn't seem to realize Nick had passed out. She thought he was acting. Finally she crossed the room to her stepfather's side. Eva saw she was trying not to be embarrassed.

"Don't mind Nick. He doesn't believe in standing on his

own two feet. How did you find Mother? Better, I hope."

Dr. McCallum didn't answer. He was angry. Shaking his arm free of hers, he went into the kitchen. But he returned almost immediately. Don got up and moved toward him.

"Nick shouldn't have done that, Oscar. I'm sorry he did."

"He's drunk. And at a time like this. Helen is ill, very ill. I'll explain in the morning." Avoiding looking at any of them, he pushed open the door and went upstairs.

Don managed to get Nick on his feet, out the door, down the front walk and into the front seat. Eva slid in next to Nick. His head dropped to her shoulder. Martha watched from the front door. Don started up the car and said something about Nick needing his friends, but Eva was not in a frame of mind to discuss the point. Her good will toward men had been sufficiently tested for one evening.

The phone rang, again and again. Don sat up, throwing off the covers. Then he fell back, closing his eyes. Martha shook him by the arm.

"It must be the hospital about Mother. She must be worse!"

The ringing came as though from the far end of a long tunnel.

"Don, answer it, please. Wake up, please wake up. Never mind then, I'll go."

On the way downstairs Martha lost one of her slippers. The voice at the other end of the phone was excited, high-pitched.

"This is Mr. Ticknor, manager of the faculty club. Is this Mrs. Chandler? I'd like to speak to your husband."

"Yes, this is Mrs. Chandler. My husband is asleep. Can't you tell me? Is it about Mr. Remy?"

"Indeed it is, Mrs. Chandler. Mr. Remy, your husband's friend, has raised a commotion here. Most members of the

club are downstairs in their robes and dressing gowns. I have been here for twelve years and there has never been anything like this, nothing so scandalous. Something will . . ."

"What did he do, Mr. Ticknor?"

"He—I find it hard to say what he did."

"Women?"

"Yes, that's it. He went down the corridor on the women's side of the building. He rapped at several of their doors. He—the screams were terrifying. They woke me up. I'm on the other side of the building and the screams woke me. I've been here twelve years and nothing . . ."

"Isn't he allowed on the women's side of the building?"

"Mrs. Chandler, Mr. Remy was stark naked! Not a stitch on him! It was three o'clock in the morning. Nothing on him. Not even pajamas!"

"I quite understand now. What do you want us to do?"

"You are friends of his, aren't you?"

"Yes, I guess we are. Yes, we're his friends."

"He can't stay here! Positively, he can't stay here! As soon as I can report him I shall, to the Dean of Men, Mr. Cushing."

"Where is Mr. Remy now? In his room?"

"Yes, in his room. It took three of us to get him back to it. Two members of the club are staying with him. I want to get him out of here. The sooner the better. No one will feel easy until he is out, bag and baggage."

"You mean you want us to come for him now? All right, yes, I'll ask my husband to get over as soon as possible. I'm terribly sorry, Mr. Ticknor."

When she turned, Martha found Don and Oscar standing together near the door to the stairway. Don was dressed except for a tie. His face said he understood. Oscar was fully clothed too, and Martha realized he had been sitting up.

She said, "He went down the corridor on the women's

side of the Club. He was naked. 'Stark naked,' Mr. Ticknor said. Don, you'd better go for him."

"Yes, I'll go. He's really done it this time. As they used to say in the army, this time he got his tits in the wringer. What would you say, Oscar?"

Oscar raised his right hand, and dropped it.

Don smiled wryly. He went to the hall closet for his coat.

"Would you like some coffee, Oscar?"

"Thank you, Martha. Yes, I would."

"Are you coming right back, Don?"

"Probably. Wish me luck. Bye-bye." He opened the door, waved and was gone.

Martha went to make the coffee. Through the kitchen door she could see the back of Oscar's head and shoulders. He was sitting on the sofa and looking at the picture of her mother and himself on the mantel. His back was straight, and his hands seemed to be folded in his lap. In a few minutes she came in quietly and stood in front of him, a cup and saucer in each hand.

"Oscar, maybe Mother isn't as ill as you think."

Oscar quivered. The morning newspaper thudded heavily against the front door. Martha put the coffee on the table.

"Martha, listen to me."

"Yes, Oscar?"

"Your mother is very ill."

Martha began to tremble. Oscar reached out for her hand. His palm was moist and very cold.

"It's true, Martha." Oscar looked at her as though she might be able to explain it.

"But why, Oscar? What is it? Tell me, please. Please, Oscar!"

"I didn't know until last night. Dr. Hirschfield told me. Her blood pressure fell sharply. I don't understand exactly what is involved. We'll learn more this morning."

"But why didn't you tell us? Why didn't you? You knew last night."

"It was impossible to tell you then. That man Remy was here. I did say she was very ill. Helen was asleep. There was no point in our going back there last night."

"What should we do? Should we go now?"

"Yes, we can. She should be awake soon. She'll want to see you."

"Oh, poor Mother. Poor Mother. I wish Don were here. Let me dress. I'll be ready in a minute, Oscar."

Martha found a dress in the closet and pulled it on quickly. Her fingertips tingled as though she had scraped them roughly across heavy sandpaper. Suddenly faint, she sat on the bed, then lay down. Her veins seemed empty and her skin was cold. Nothing had happened really. Mother was all right. When she got up, her body seemed to weigh almost nothing, hardly to belong to her.

Downstairs, Oscar was at the door, ready to go.

"I've left a note for Don on the mantel. I told him that you suggest he stay with Remy and that you will call him as soon as there is anything new to tell him."

"All right, Oscar. Oh, poor, dear Mother."

The sun was coming up to the left of the faculty club. Day had not fully broken and the large but squat building looked more massive in the purple mist than it would later. Mr. Ticknor was waiting in the foyer. He was a chubby little man who seemed to be performing a duty that overtaxed his nervous energies.

"Mr. Remy is upstairs in his room. With two members of the club. I'll show you the way."

Several men, none of whom Don knew, were standing about in shirt sleeves or in dressing gowns. No women were visible. Probably they were talking together in some of the upstairs rooms.

"Mr. Chandler, it was bad, very bad. That Remy is a case. One of the ladies had hysterics. Took three members to get him back to his room. I am going to report him at eight-thirty, as soon as I can, to Mr. Cushing."

"He's an old friend of the Dean of Men."

Ticknor gave him an incredulous look.

The door to Nick's room was ajar, but Ticknor knocked. Nick, fully dressed, sat on a chair facing the window. One of the men was dozing, stretched out on the bed. The other—it was Smith, from Botany—was sitting on the radiator and paring his nails. He nodded to Chandler. Don went over to Nick.

"Hello, Nick."

Nick was quite sober now. He got up quickly, his face glowering.

"Let's get out of here."

Mr. Ticknor flushed slightly, and the man on the bed opened his eyes. Smith smiled, continuing the work on his nails.

"How about your baggage?"

"I'll send for it." Nick had started out, as though he were striding toward the middle of a stage.

"Okay, Nick."

Don raised his hand in a feeble gesture of farewell to the men in the room. Mr. Ticknor sighed. Don followed Nick down the hall and down the stairs. Nick gave an icy glare to Dan Hofstrau, who Don felt talked too much at faculty meetings. Several others avoided looking at them. Two carried on a studied conversation.

Nick said nothing, not even when they had drawn up in front of the McCallum house, ready to get out.

"I'm sorry, Nick. I guess we all had too much to drink last night."

"Yes, be very understanding about it."

Nick was going to be histrionic. Don sat back, waiting.

"Somebody had to do something about it. Give them something to talk about. Then they can all go on feeling respectable again. They can throw me out on my ass, if that will make them feel any more righteous. As it will."

Suddenly Nick started to sniffle. Then he put his hands on his knees and rocked back and forth.

"Christ, Christ, why do I go on like this? I'll never change. I ought to shoot myself."

"Things aren't as bad as that. We'll go into the house, and you try to rest. We'll do all the talking later."

Nick followed Don in, catching his breath like a little boy who has seen his puppy run over and is trying to stop crying. The living room was empty. Nick seemed very tired, and he went to the sofa and lay down. He closed his eyes, put his arm over his face and turned away from the light coming in the front window. Only then did Don realize how quiet the house was. Perhaps Martha and Oscar were upstairs, hoping to avoid embarrassing Nick by their presence. Don went into the hall to listen for sounds from upstairs, but there were none. Then he opened the closet door and saw that both Martha's and Oscar's coats were gone.

The hospital! Helen must be worse! Then he saw the note on the mantel. It was against Oscar's and Helen's photograph and written in Oscar's neat hand.

6:15 a.m.

Dear Don,

The news which I have to tell you will be shocking, as it is to Martha and me. Yesterday evening I learned from Dr. Hirschfield that her mother's condition is very serious.

Martha suggests that you stay with Remy. I'll phone from the hospital, if necessary.

Oscar

What did it mean? They had not been prepared for this at all. Oscar had said she was very ill. But he had thought Oscar was upset at seeing Nick and said it as a kind of reprimand, out of annoyance. He had better telephone the hospital. Eventually, the operator got the call through. A voice said, "We are sorry, Mr. Chandler, but we cannot give you any further information at the moment. . . . Yes, Mr. Chandler, your wife and Professor McCallum are here. . . . We will tell her that you will come if she wishes. . . ."

Helen had been depressed but they thought it was some minor disorder. She had been very quiet when he had driven her to the hospital for her examination. Now he was ashamed that he had thought she had been making a plea for attention. How was Martha taking it? He ought to go to Martha right now but he couldn't. Not with Nick to take care of. Don turned sharply toward Nick. Nick's arm had fallen from his face and he was sleeping. His breath was coming hard through his dilating nostrils. Moving toward the couch, Don straightened the pillow that kept Nick's head from falling back easily. Nick's lower lip hung loose, slightly twisted under the neat mustache, flecked with saliva.

An automobile motor turned over, failed. Then the noise of the starter again, the motor caught, and the car started down the street. Don stared at Nick, then went quietly toward the kitchen. He lit the gas under the coffee pot. The coffee grounds had dripped down one side and were soggy in the spout. Don picked up the pot and the liquid sloshed loosely against the sides. There were two or three cupfuls left.

Nick stirred on the sofa. There was a sound of the springs creaking. He was sitting up. Don ignored him, and waited for the coffee to heat. Nick called out in the half-

sarcastic manner he used when mentioning anything remotely associated with middle-class mores.

"Makin' coffee?"

"Yes. Want some?"

"The hell with it. I'm going to wash up."

"Good idea."

"Brilliant idea, but I'm going to do it anyway." Nick's tread was heavy on the stairs. In a moment, the sound of water was humming in the pipes.

The coffee was lukewarm and bitter. One mouthful was enough. Don spat it into the sink, and poured the rest down the drain. The taste remained on his tongue. Thinking about the coffee was preferable to thinking about Helen. The phone rang and he was excused from having to think.

It was Eva. She had heard about Nick. A solicitous sister librarian had telephoned her, giving an exact and full account of Nick's conduct at the faculty club. Eva's voice was slightly hoarse. The gist of the informant's comments was not hard to guess. Eva did not ask to speak to Nick, but she asked how he was. She said he could spend the day at her apartment if he wished. Then she began to cry, and Don said they'd better talk later.

As he hung up the telephone, Nick came downstairs.

Nick was sick, nervous and sick, as though he had had a stomach transplanted from some skinny old convict who gave his last burp for humanity. He stretched out on the sofa. About two quarts of 90 proof had got all his molecules to thinking they were dissolving in alcohol. His brain pan was like a still. That's why he only vaguely remembered propositioning those females in the Virginity Wing of the club. Last thing he remembered clearly was Chandler putting him to bed, treating him like a sixteen-

year-old who had got tight on three beers. He had let Chandler think he was going to sleep, but he planned to pay Eva a little call. Finally when Chandler had pulled out, he had sat up and poured himself a drink, up to the brim, then probably another—pretty soon he was drinking it from the bottle. Next thing he remembered Brother Ticknor was shaking his finger under his nose and some son-of-a-bitch was grabbing his arm as though he were drowning. The things Ticknor said to him should have got him a stiff boot in the ass. Now he was exhausted, on the verge of fainting. That was what kept crossing him up. He trembled, and twice he found himself crying. Just nerves. They kept pinging against his skin and he was afraid he'd start to see things crawling on the wall. He had seen them several times in the past.

Lying there on the couch, he could, most enjoyably, have kicked Brother Chandler in the scrotum. Chandler had been hovering over him like a Salvation Army major studying a stew in the gutter. At first Nick had slept or dozed, trying to get his nerves to go back into their ordinary muscles instead of trying to find new ones. The look on Chandler's face, as though humanity had betrayed him! Not all of us, just him!

He had got up when Brother Chandler went out to the kitchen to make coffee. Brother Chandler would ladle it out to him, the prodigal son, the returned sinner. He could pour it into a pot of pansies and turn them mocha brown.

From the bathroom Nick had heard Chandler talking to Eva. Not that he could hear what was being said, but the tone! The world had come apart at the seams, and all the slimy forms had come up and were crawling around in the mustard. He had put his head under the cold water which sounded like a waterfall trying to break through the rock a hundred years ahead of schedule.

When he came down he deliberately avoided asking

about Eva. Chandler had just finished talking with her. The Female Wing of the club discovered one of the members had a member. Titter, titter. Buzz, buzz, buzz. The Great Discovery. Nick cleared his throat, then said, "Where are Martha and Oscar? Does my presence embarrass the household?"

Instead of answering, Chandler turned his head away. Well, Nickie Boy could ask again. "Didn't you hear me? Are they still asleep?"

"No. At the hospital. Helen is worse."

"Sorry. Has Pomfret, our dear chairman, called about me yet?"

"No, he hasn't. He must know about you though. I'd guess you're pretty famous this morning. Before the day is out you'll undoubtedly hear from him."

So this was to be the line, the bantering tone. He was to be tossed to the biggest lion in the arena, and all the Romans would wipe their sweaty palms on their togas.

"I think I'll resign. I'll call the old bastard and tell him I'm quitting."

"What good would that do you?"

"Good? I can tell the old bastard what I think."

"He already knows what you think. Hadn't you better call your wife instead?"

Nora. Nick had not given a thought to Nora. Why did anyone have to tell Nora? Somebody would tell her, but *why* should she have to know? How would she take it this time? She wouldn't leave him for Jessup—yet she might. It was possible. Nick had taken her away from him once, but women sometimes did crazy things. When Nora had started dating Jessup, he followed them, outside the restaurant, outside the dance, in the seat behind them at the movie. They had always known he was there. Then the night after that big dance, there she had been, standing on the front porch of the sorority house, and Jessup had

leaped over the railing, like the shadow of a cat, taking off his glasses as he came at him across the lawn. Nick had swung and missed and Jessup had caught him flat on the nose, breaking it, covering him with blood, more blood than he thought he had. It was in his eyes and he could not see. He was hit three times more before Nora stopped it. Then they had known how it was. Nora had known too. Through the blood, Nick saw Jessup put his glasses on, and he had tried to get up, to clout him a good one, but Nora had held him, Nora wouldn't let him, and he had fainted. Then she had soaked his head with a wet towel while the girls from the house giggled and whispered, standing above her. It had been days before they said much to each other. He had been afraid, but ashamed to admit it. He had outlasted Jessup. And one day they got hitched. She was Mrs. R. They got along. When Nora got sore, she got over it. Even when he messed around with other women, she knew he was just tomcatting. When Nora came into the room, things got peaceful. Why did people like Brother Chandler want to cross him up with Nora? Always some goddamn righteous busybody. . . .

Chandler was standing over him.

"How about it?"

"About what?"

"Calling your wife."

Nick's manner would be that of the gentleman who hates to impose on his host in the slightest way. His irony would be heavy enough to cause rain, but Chandler wouldn't get it.

"All right to use your phone?"

"Sure, go ahead."

"Don, would you mind getting the number for me? It's Dexter 2–4688."

Chandler looked sulky and put-upon, but he picked up the phone and dialed the operator. When the Elktown

operator began to ring, Nick pushed down deeper into his chair.

"Please tell her I need her, tell Nora Nick needs her."

Chandler reached over, pulling him by the arm. He had put the damn thing right in his hand. The bastard. Nick heard Nora's voice. She sounded frightened.

"Nick?"

His stomach turned over. "Nora, hello, Nora. Yes, this is Nick. I've been fired. They fired me. 'Bye."

He hung up the phone. Chandler walked slowly over to him, put his hand on his shoulder and pushed him back into a chair. Chandler picked up the phone, but it rang before he could begin to dial.

"Yes, Mrs. Remy, this is Donald Chandler, Nick's office mate. Nick has some bad news for you, but he hung up without explaining it. Nick should tell you. . . . Yes, he's been fired. Not officially yet, but he will be. That's right, something of a scandal. . . . Yes, women. . . ."

Chandler's Yes, Mrs. Remy, No, Mrs. Remy, That's right, Mrs. Remy were the year's biggest pain in the ass. Now Chandler was shaking his finger, reprimanding. Who in hell did he think he was!

Nick looked up at him, sidewise. "You shouldn't have made me speak to her. I wasn't ready."

"Never mind that. She's coming. Probably be here at three-thirty. Put your goddam stupid head down there and try to rest. You're famous this morning. Enjoy it."

Nick lay back, putting both hands under his head. He crossed his feet. What should he do? He could always kill himself. Miles had. Yes, maybe he would.

"Don, if you can't locate me when she arrives, send a notice to the obituary department. I'll appreciate your doing that."

What if he did kill himself? Really do it. She'd be happy. Very pleased, really. He was trembling again.

Chandler was standing over him saying something. Who in hell did he think he was, always wagging his goddamn finger.

"For God sake, you self-loving son-of-a-bitch. Someone should have slapped the whey out of you a long time ago."

Nick pushed the coffee table away, and started to get up. He certainly didn't have to listen to this.

"I'm sorry, Nick. Sit down."

That was right, Brother Chandler, you should not have said that. Someone's feelings might be hurt. For the moment, he would ignore it. No, he'd haul his ass on out of there right away.

"I guess I'll go over to Eva's."

"Okay, Nick. I'll get you a taxi."

"No, I'd rather walk." He stood up and got his coat from the closet. At the door he turned.

"Good-by, Don. What you did just now was good for me. Too many people put up with my performances. I know I kid myself."

Chandler was looking at him a little quizzically.

Did he kid himself? What if he did? The hell with it. At three-thirty, Nora. Why was she coming? Why couldn't she stay where she was? Why not go look up that jackass who broke his nose? Why not? Maybe she would.

"Good-by, Nick. Call if you want us."

Chandler seemed embarrassed. Anxious to get rid of him? Well, if that was the way.

Nick shook hands with him, a really warm, brotherly clasp. As he was leaning he tilted his head ever so slightly, smiling just a little, with a touch of sadness. Chandler closed the door behind him. Maybe, thought Nick, that performance had given him something to think about.

To hell with Chandler. His saying, *Nick, you're famous this morning!* The ironic son-of-a-bitch. All Nick wanted

was to be famous with Nora. The rest of them could all go to hell.

Dr. Hirschfield, unwrapping the band from her arm, was explaining to Mrs. McCallum that medical men did not know as much as they'd like to know about blood pressure. Just why hers had fallen so quickly he did not know. But this was the third reading since eight o'clock that morning, and it was higher each time. This was a good sign. He would run a series of tests and perhaps they could find the cause of her troubles. He wasn't as worried about her as he had been last night, and he hoped he hadn't alarmed Professor McCallum. Bye-bye now, he said, he'd see her later in the afternoon.

Mrs. McCallum smiled to herself. She liked young Dr. Hirschfield. He was pleasant, and his acknowledging his ignorance was somehow reassuring. Oscar had been terribly worried, dear Oscar. Martha had been very worried too. If it hadn't been for all the talk about Remy's escapade she never would have been able to make them stop speculating on the nature of her ailment. They had gone home for lunch, and she supposed that when Oscar came back, as he planned to, there'd be even more about it. Probably Remy had given Don his version. Goodness, even the nurses had been buzzing about it all morning. And nurses were supposed to be shockproof.

Miss Gallagher, the pretty little dark-eyed nurse, had told her first, before Oscar and Martha had come in. She had told her as soon as she had placed the breakfast tray on the bed. Miss Gallagher had come on duty at five thirty, and even at that time the story had already reached the hospital. It was as though the story itself had raced across the campus, turned into Front Street, raced along to the

hospital, then hurried up the stairs into the halls and into all the rooms. Everyone loved gossip, especially this kind. Miss Gallagher had rolled her dark eyes and said she had heard the wild and roving lover was quite handsome. Mrs. McCallum assured her this was true. But he was also married—at which Miss Gallagher made a wry face and said, "Ah, then, the women in the faculty club did right to raise their voices in righteous protest! Eat a good breakfast now," she said.

It had surprised Mrs. McCallum that no one seemed really shocked. Not even sweet little Martha. She had of course been worried about what would happen to Nick. And in that she was right. Nor had Oscar been shocked. Probably less so than any of them. Months ago he had predicted that Nick Remy would eventually get into serious trouble. But its having happened and so soon gave him no pleasure. Oscar was not vindictive. He had not even reminded them of his prediction. But the administration would have to dismiss Remy. They all knew that. All one could hope for was that the experience would teach him a lesson. It might serve to straighten him out.

Mrs. McCallum looked up, Oscar was at the door. "Oh, hello, dear," she said. "Dr. Hirschfield has rather good news for us."

Charles Pomfret had had a phone call from Horace Tilden, the dean, a little after noon. Tilden had begun by saying he'd been talking with Fred Cushing, who in turn had been talking with Mr. Ticknor. "Most of Cushing's morning," Horace had said, "was given to decompressing Ticknor. Cushing hadn't seen anyone so worked up in a long time. If Ticknor were any more blown up about this man Remy of yours, he could have been rolled out of his office like a great rubber ball." *Ah, yes, Remy!* Charles

Pomfret had said to himself. Here they were, almost at the end of the year—then something like this happened.

"What did he do, Horace?"

"Charles, everyone on the campus, maybe everyone in town, although we hope not, knows what he's done!" He went on to say that the insulation at the Pomfret house was remarkably good, etc.

The dean's assumption of a jocular tone at times like these always was a trial for Charles Pomfret. Patience, patience.

"What did he do, Horace? Tell me in simple words what happened."

"Yes, Charles, in simple words. For one thing, he was in the women's wing of the faculty club about three o'clock this morning. For another, he was drunk. For another, he was naked. Not a stitch on him. And you say you hadn't heard!" No, he hadn't heard, but alas, now he had. Mr. Pomfret asked Horace to wait a moment until he pulled up a chair. He'd feel better sitting down.

Once seated he asked whether the *People's Gazette* had learned about it? No, so far as any of the dean's associates could tell, no one from the paper had inquired. Presumably everyone at the faculty club would be discreet enough to talk about it only behind closed doors, at least until it was no longer news.

What, Charles Pomfret wondered, was he to do about Remy? If only he had had his escapade three weeks later, classes would have been over. Remy did not have tenure, and it would have been simple enough not to renew the contract, to advise him to continue his graduate work elsewhere. The dean asked whether Remy had been actively at work toward his Ph.D. Well, nominally at work. Pomfret admitted that Remy probably was the kind who never would finish a degree, but there was no conclusive proof at this point. Unless, the dean interrupted, one considered

his being a true Paul Bunyan of the Bottle and a prematurely decayed Casanova as evidence! Oh, Charles Pomfret said, his reputation in these spheres had reached Dean Tilden's office? Yes, Dean Tilden answered, indeed they had. For his part, he added, he was afraid that Mr. Remy had to be given his walking papers. And Charles, old boy, knew who had to hand them to him, no later, say, than today, possibly tomorrow. Yes, Charles Pomfret said, he understood, and he would be in touch with Dean Tilden later. . . .

Charles Pomfret was a serious man, and he did not like Dean Tilden's taking a joshing tone about serious matters. Pomfret was to retire this spring as chairman of the history department. He had another year to serve, but this would be given solely to teaching. The Remy affair would cast a shadow over these last weeks. Charles Pomfret was a fair-minded man, and wanted no one to be hurt, least of all by him. Remy was not the sort of person he liked or even understood, and he knew that Remy did not like him.

Charles Pomfret wore a gray Vandyke, stiff white collars, and rich silk ties. He felt the dignity of his profession required dignity in dress, in bearing, and in conduct. More than once he had seen Remy imitating him. One time in coming into the history department office he had found Remy giving mock dictation to Miss George, the department secretary. Charles Pomfret had had to admit the manner was his own. There had been no choice but to say good morning as he passed them on his way to his own office. Miss George had been too embarrassed to reply, but not Remy. Remy had returned his greeting with a flourish. "Good morning, Professor Pomfret, sir," he had said, "Good morning." Charles had felt obliged to tell his wife Harriet about the incident, and to ask whether she found him stuffy. Harriet had not answered directly. She had taken his hand and squeezed it. "One thing you are for certain, Charles dear—you are tolerant. I hope that

young Mr. Remy knows that." Charles Pomfret had been grateful to Harriet for that. If his dignity made him stuffy, well, one could not have everything.

This afternoon he and Harriet would take a long walk along the river, longer than usual. Harriet was downtown shopping for their two grandchildren. She'd be home soon. Once he had told a colleague that the river was his psychiatrist's couch. Walking along the bank he tried to see events flowing in their own way, finding their own channels. Sometimes he felt that the only thing he had learned in getting older, if he had learned anything, was to let events go their own way. Maybe it wasn't wisdom, maybe it was only tiredness, unwillingness to try to control people's destinies. Even as a young man he had had no desire to run other people's lives. Perhaps that was why he was eventually made head of his department. Power interested him almost not at all. People had to learn to control their own destinies, sometimes pulling hard upstream against the current, or, in going downstream, guiding the craft wherever possible.

Don and Martha Chandler had finished a light supper when the phone rang. Martha was upstairs, getting ready to go to the hospital, and Don called to her that he'd take it.

"Yes? Yes, this is Donald Chandler. . . . I'm sorry, I don't . . . Oh, yes . . . At Miss Dobbsley's apartment, you say. . . . He's been taken to the hospital, then. . . . Yes, we'll come over right away. Thank you, thank you very much."

"Martha! Martha! Come on downstairs." He could hear her come out of her room and start down.

Martha came into the living room. She was dressed, ready to leave. Her throat was reddening from excitement.

"What is it, Don? Is it about Mother?"

"No, about Nick. I don't know what it is for certain. It was Eva's landlady. She wasn't very coherent, but she said Nick's been taken to the hospital. I guess we'd better get over there and see what's up."

"Oh, dear. Poor Nick."

The house Eva lived in was old and had been cut up into small apartments. Her apartment was on the side and had a private entry. The porch light was on when Don and Martha drove up in their car. The front door of the house opened as they walked toward the porch. A wispy-haired stout woman, dressed in a wrapper, came to the railing.

"I'm Mrs. Larnahan. You're Mr. Chandler, and . . . ?"

"I'm Donald Chandler. And this is Martha Chandler, my wife."

"How do you do! Mr. Chandler, they carried that young man out of here on a stretcher. Something's been going on back there for some time. I'm not nosy, but I don't want the house to get a bad name. I hope you can explain that to Miss Dobbsley. As nice as you can, but firm. We can't have any scandal. She asked me to call you, so I suppose you are friends. So you tell her that for me."

"I'll tell her, Mrs. Larnahan. You can be sure I'll tell her."

"I'll appreciate it. Good night to both of you."

Mrs. Larnahan moved heavily across the porch, then closed the door. The light on the porch went out.

"Don, what could have happened to Nick?"

"We'll know in a minute."

Eva had heard them approaching her apartment and was waiting, peering through the screen door. "Is that you, Don? Who is that with you?"

"Yes, it's me. And Martha's with me."

Eva backed away from the door as they came in. Her face was streaked with tears. Don moved toward her.

"What is it, Eva? What happened?"

Eva made a visible effort to steady herself and said—

"He cut his throat and wrists!"

Eva's expression was vacant, almost simple-minded, but she pointed to the hall table. There was the telephone. There it was, if they wanted to find out for themselves.

Frowning, Don went to the phone, asked the operator for the superintendent of nurses at the hospital. It took only a minute of waiting. After inquiring about Mr. Remy, he listened to her account. No, Nick was not in danger. There was no shock. The cuts were superficial. One wrist had bled badly. Nothing more. No, there was really nothing seriously wrong with him. He'd be released soon.

Don thanked her and hung up. He walked to the sofa and kicked the foot of it angrily. Eva was slumped in an armchair and seemed unaware of him, but Martha looked toward him inquiringly.

"Martha, you know Nick needs a kick in the ass worse than anyone I've known in a long, long time. A real boot. God damn him. There's nothing wrong with him."

Martha shook her head incredulously and moved to the back of Eva's chair. She patted Eva's head soothingly. When Eva seemed quiet, Martha spoke to her.

"Eva, the superintendent of nurses says Nick's condition is not serious."

Eva shook her head, no, no, and the tears began again. Don sat down on the sofa, and, after a while, Martha joined him.

Martha found herself studying Eva. . . . One could not call her attractive. Once though she had read an essay which said: *Anything* is beautiful if you say it is. If one said it hard enough and often enough he might almost believe it about Eva Dobbsley.

The drapes of Eva's living room were brightly flowered, with roses and sheaves of wheat. On one wall was a large

print, framed in a well-rubbed and expensive ebony, of a buxom Renaissance corpse midway in the stages of decomposition. On the coffee table in front of her and the Chandlers were three ivory deer which seemed to be drinking from a pool, and next them the three monkeys who hear no evil, see no evil and speak no evil.

Eva raised her head. The tears had smeared the powder and rouge on her cheeks. Her lower lip quivered. Eva looked at Don, then across at Martha, and said—

"He did it, just as he used to say he would."

Don answered her. "Yes, Eva. We know that. Where was Mrs. Remy when it happened?"

"She was here. I didn't want that, but he insisted. I felt awful, meeting her. I wanted them to go to a hotel, but he said Nora was emancipated. He brought her here."

"Was it bad, meeting her?"

"I was terribly embarrassed."

"How was she with him? And with you?"

"She didn't ask any questions at first. She was cool, but not angry. Later, when we were alone, she asked me a lot of questions. I guess she understands him. That was after we came back here. I think she let him bring her so she could see what sort of person I am."

"She's at the hospital now?"

"Yes, she's there with him."

"Martha and I will go see him, if you want."

"It wouldn't do any good."

"Eva, would you like to try to rest?"

"Not now, not now. I want to tell you what happened. Nick didn't drink much. Very little, for him. Nora said she'd help me fix dinner. She'd been waiting for a chance to talk with me. I told her what I knew about Nick's carryings-on at the club. While we were in the kitchen he came in to borrow a pencil. Said he wanted to write some dirty verses on the living room wall. He sounded a little more

like himself. Later he said he'd like to take a bath. Said for us not to peek. Just like his old self. He did it in the bathtub. That's where we found him. He was moaning. Oh, let me show you the note he wrote us, to both of us."

Eva walked over to the old mahogany table and picked up an envelope. She handed it to Don, then sat down again.

Don read it. There was a sentence saying suicides should not be messy and he hoped his would not be. Nick asked Nora to go home and try to forget him. And he advised Eva to be more discriminating in the company she kept. To one and all he said good-by. It was signed *Nick Remy*, with a large flourish.

Don handed the note to Martha. Then he went to the kitchen to get Eva a glass of water. There was a bottle of aspirin on the window sill, and he took two tablets from it. He brought them to her, and she swallowed them in a nervous gulp. He found a coat in the closet to cover her with. Martha led Eva to the sofa. She lay down like a young child, the tears still wet on her cheeks. Don put the coat over her and told her to go to sleep. Then they left, closing the door quietly behind them.

The moon was high and brilliant. In the distance, on the far side of the campus, they could see the hospital, its lights honeycombing the side of the building. They got into the car.

"Martha, what in the world is going to happen to the Remys? That's a very dangerous kind of game he was playing. The lunatic side of his mind may find some dramatic satisfaction in it, but to Nora it must be very distressing."

"Why don't you try to see her, honey? Maybe we can help her. Phone her tomorrow. Eva said she's with Nick at the hospital."

"Okay, Martha. First thing in the morning. You know, I

wonder what Nora Remy is like. What would you guess? What's she like?"

"I don't know, honey, but knowing Nick I'd guess she's two things, pretty and patient. He wouldn't want her unless she was pretty, and she wouldn't put up with him unless she was patient."

Don laughed. "Bull's-eye. Maybe!"

In the receiving room, Nick had been lifted from the stretcher and put on a table. The bandages which the internes had applied were examined by the receiving-room doctor, a middle-aged man with a small iron-gray mustache, who went about his task as though he were examining dials on a machine. No expression crossed his face, not even after he had finished with Nick and had given instructions for putting him back on the stretcher and rolling him down the corridor to a room. An orderly pushed Nick along, and Nora had followed with the doctor and one of the internes who had come with the ambulance. In the room Nick was lifted onto the bed and the doctor took another look at him. The interne, who had had a strange look on his face during the entire examination, told the doctor in a not-very-low voice that one would think anybody could find the veins if he were really looking for them. Nick had not opened his eyes more than two or three times for heavy glances at the several of them standing about him, but hearing the interne he pushed himself up on his elbows and glared at him, then lay down again. The interne pretended not to notice but his ears reddened and, muttering something, he walked out of the room. The doctor shook his head slightly. Before leaving he turned toward Nora.

"I'll send the superintendent of nurses down to see you, Mrs. Remy, in case you want to spend the night here."

He was gone before she could answer.

Nick had said nothing to her, nor she to him.

In a few minutes a tall, thin woman with sharply quizzical eyes came in. Her hair, prematurely white, was carefully groomed. The glance she directed toward Nick said she'd been talking with the doctor or interne.

"My dear," she said to Nora Remy, "there's a cot here already made up. You are welcome to use it. It's in the next room."

"Thank you. I should like to stay."

In the orderly room, where there were cooking utensils, a small stove, and cabinets for supplies, the superintendent opened up the bed and together they pushed it into the room, leaving it under the window that overlooked the street. It was separated from Nick's bed by a screen. Nora did not ask to have it removed.

"Ring if you want anything, Mrs. Remy. By the way, my dear, there was a call from Mr. Chandler wanting to know about your husband's condition. I said there's nothing much wrong."

Nick grunted and she turned slowly to look at him, distending her nostrils slightly.

"Thank you, nurse," Nora said.

"Good night. Ring if you want anything."

After she had gone, Nora sat on the edge of the cot, staring at the theater across the street. There was Bingo tonight. Three hundred dollars in prizes. After some minutes she turned toward the screen and spoke loudly enough for Nick to hear—

"Is there anything you want?"

"You can turn off the light."

Nora stood up, reached the switch near the door next to the screen and snapped it off. She stood at the window, looking out.

"Nora!"

"Yes, Nick?"
"Nothing, I guess. Good night."
"Good night, Nick."

The first show was over and the audience was coming out of the movie house. The lights in the sign above the marquee were red, yellow and purple. The colors chased each other around the margins, then rushed together in a burst of light, THE RAINBOW.

Nora studied the street, the shop windows and the several restaurants. On the far corner was a White Tower. Two white-coated internes were standing near the window sipping coffee.

Nora took off her dress and hung it on the end of the screen, then she lay down on top of the blankets.

"Nora!"

"Yes, Nick?"

"Whaddaya hear from Jessup?"

"You know I haven't seen him."

"Where's he hanging out now?"

"He may still be in St. Louis. Or he may not be. Go to sleep, Nick."

"What a clown! Old Jessup." Then he said, "See you in the morning."

Nick occasionally asked about Ted Jessup, usually the same question: *What do you hear from Jessup, Nora?* And she always said, *You know I haven't heard from him. Why should I?* Nick didn't mention him because he thought she might have heard, he did it as a way of asking how Nick and Nora were getting along.

Nora knew why Nick had tried to kill himself, or pretended to try. Nick's brother Jack had explained many things to her the very night after the farmer had stopped her from committing suicide. Nick had never known about

that. There were two secrets she kept from Nick, her attempted suicide and what Jack had told her about Nick, about himself too.

Nora remembered clearly what Nick had been like when she first knew him. They had been in several classes together. Nick was invariably alone. He wore a turtle-necked sweater, rarely combed his hair, and walked with a swagger. She remembered especially an English composition class. It met at eight o'clock in the morning. Nick was usually late. He'd come in without offering the instructor any apology, and would stride down the side of the room. It was quite a while before she realized he usually sat one or two rows behind her, whatever the class. In this composition class, each of them read his own work aloud. Nick's writing was imaginative, wild, and edged with cynicism. Ted Jessup took to calling him Heathcliffe. But the teaching staff liked him, or at least felt he could become a good professional scholar. He was given the College Graduate Scholarship. Nora remembered Nick's walking across the stage, toward President Appleton, the day awards were read off. He had put on a coat, but instead of looking toward President Appleton he had, smiling his half-cynical smile, looked sidewise at the students and faculty in the auditorium. And he looked at them again as he walked off the stage. The award had something to do with them, although Nora never knew what Nick thought it meant.

Perhaps his contest with the world was part of what attracted her to Nick. The other boys, like Ted, were going into business, on to law school, or into medicine. Most of them were sensible, like her own father and the men she had known at home in Cedarville. Nick was different. He had come at Ted, across the sorority house lawn, as though he were stalking an enemy. And he never phoned her—he was just suddenly there, when she came out of class, or left her room, or turned a corner. He talked in his ironic way

to her, but his eyes always said he wasn't being ironic about her. The rest of the college could push or pull their little wagons and he wouldn't care one way or another. But Nora and Nick—that was different. One evening about twilight he had driven up to the sorority in a borrowed car, and she had gone down to see what he wanted. Opening the door, he said, "C'mon, we're going to get hitched. There's a judge down the road." And she had gone.

Living with Nick was—well, like living in a cabin at the top of a mountain. There were frequent and violent storms. Something burned in him, hot and resinous. The same intensity was in his love for her. It was wild and sometimes frightening, and yet wonderful. What would finally become of them she did not know. Perhaps they'd become like other people once Nick got his degree and started teaching. For the present she was not going to worry. He was never angry with her, but he was with everyone else. He poked fun at the textbooks he read, at the courses he took, at the way the registrar's office, where Nora was a secretary, was run, at people going to church on Sunday morning, at the woman's page in the newspaper, at radio programs, at the opinions of anyone they met, at . . . She had finally figured out that Nick had a private war with respectability. As soon as he was a little drunk, and he had begun to drink more and more, sometimes in the afternoon, he would discourse on people who never looked at the rules society had, who simply obeyed them. He'd be goddamned if he was going to join up. As the year went along, Nick got worse. He met most of his classes, but sometimes he didn't come home at night. She had not expected to learn he was seeing a girl.

The girl, an artist-photographer, had opened a studio, an atelier she called it, not far from the campus. She was much prettier than poor Eva. How Nick came to know her, Nora never learned. She had been only casually aware of her

existence until the day the girl sat across the desk from her in the registrar's office, saying *You'll have to divorce him, Mrs. Remy.* The girl continued to talk, but the rest of what she said was lost. Nora had collected several things from her desk, put them in her pocketbook and walked out.

Soon she was out in the country, near a small lake. Students went there for picnics. She had been to the apartment to pick up the hose from the vacuum cleaner and to get the car. She had bought the car, hoping it might help to domesticate Nick a little, but he wouldn't ride in it. He had come to feel that a car was the middle class, was—whatever it was that he couldn't stand. He didn't like cars.

Nora had parked the car in a meadow that ran down to the lake, then attached the hose to the exhaust pipe and pushed it through the rear side window. The motor ran dully and heavily. Her foot was pressed steadily on the accelerator. The meadow was filled with wild carrots, Queen Anne's lace. She did not remember feeling angry or hurt, mostly only tired and depressed. There was a library book on the front seat. A girl in the office had asked her to look at it. She picked it up, hoping it would distract her from thinking about the gas and how long it would take before she no longer cared how long it took.

The opening pages of the book, all of which she was able to read, described a woman talking with St. Peter and, oddly, complaining about her husband. Peter told her there were many husbands where she now was and she could have her choice. The gas was having its way with Nora and she became the woman talking with Peter. Together they walked past three long rows of robed figures, but she could remember none of their faces after she had passed them. Only Peter seemed real. He might have been a cobbler, someone in a foreign section of a big city, except for the flowing robes. Finishing the tour she felt vaguely un-

easy. Peter cupped her chin in his calloused hand, and she wondered whether his great beard, which he had been rubbing hard with his knuckles, had lice. Young lady, your husband is over there, and looking up she saw him, hanging his head, yet sneering a little, the lines of contempt pulling at the corners of his mouth. He came toward her, sneering and smiling, the way he always did.

A farmer, whose cow and dog had come up to the car, had found her. He talked very severely to her, and his dog barked and barked. If she wanted to kill herself she should go back to town. If she tried it here on his property again, he'd have her arrested. She shouldn't try it in the lake either, because the farmers around there had enough to do without giving their time to dragging for fools who drowned themselves. He kept the hose, so she couldn't try it again in his neighborhood. She wanted to say she was glad he had found her, but he wanted to get her out of there as quickly as possible. He had walked her several times around the car, then he told her to drive off. Nick wasn't home when she got there but Jack was. The landlady had let him in.

Jack had been in the kitchen, eating a sandwich and drinking beer from a bottle.

"Hey there, girl. You must be Nora. Nice to meet you. I'm Nick's famous brother, Jack."

She hadn't been frightened. Even before she realized who the man in the kitchen was his voice had sounded friendly. Jack came into the living room as she took off her coat.

"Hey, girl, you look green under the eyes. What you been up to? Nick not treating you right? I'll brain the ever-loving bastard. What's the trouble, kid? You can tell me."

She had started to cry, and Jack led her to the sofa. The crying continued for minutes, and when it stopped, suddenly, Jack was sitting in a chair opposite her. He looked a little like Nick but he was smaller and his eyes, narrow

slits, were intensely blue. It was easy to believe he was with a circus or a carnival.

"What's he doing to you, kid, two-timing you, beating you? Naw, Nick wouldn't beat you. He's a miserable bastard, but he wouldn't clobber you. Must be he's chasing a skirt. Look, kid, you're real cute. Don't worry, he'll be back, wanting to hop into bed with you. He's a slob, but he's gone on you. He's told me. He writes once in a while, when he knows where I am. He needs you, kid. You gotta believe that. Me, I don't need nobody, but Nick does. He needs you."

"I'll try to stop crying, Jack. Please forgive me. The first time we meet and I spoil it. I'm sorry."

"That's nothing, kid. If you gotta cry, go to it. And you don't have to tell me what it's all about. If it's something between you and Nick and you want it private, then private it is. But, look, if you're gonna be crying let's do it in the kitchen while we're rustling up a little grub. My outfit broke up right across the river from St. Louis, and I used my life's savings getting from there to here. Thought I'd say hello to Nick and meet you, then hit out again."

Nora had started dinner, after first fixing Jack a strong drink. He stood in the doorway of the kitchen watching her. Fortunately there was a cooked ham in the refrigerator, and vegetables. Preparing enough for the two of them was easy. Several times she sniffed, but seeing Jack there, smiling his curious little smile, reassured her.

"You know, baby, Nick's lucky. This little place, and a nice kid like you. But only one side of Nick's square head knows he's lucky. That's it, ain't it?"

"I guess so, Jack. Maybe that's it. He's off someplace, probably with . . . Oh, I don't want to worry you with it."

Jack put his drink on the kitchen table. He had had only a little of it.

"You don't like your drink, Jack?"

"Naw, kid, it's fine. I'm not much on the booze. It's part of my philosophy, not liking anything too much." Jack looked at her sidewise, the way Nick did sometimes.

"Oh, that's not like Nick."

"Yeah. Well, old Nick thinks he's a philosopher, with his college education and all that. You know he's my kid brother, I'm older. I'm a little smarter too. Nick's trying to make the world pay him for something it didn't even do to him. You know what I mean? You know what I'm getting at?"

"No, Jack. I don't know. Sometimes I think Nick hates everyone, especially himself."

"Sure, then you know what I mean. But what you probably don't know is what caused it. Maybe even Nick don't know. But I know, and if I tell you it ain't something to pass on to Nick. You understand, kid? I ain't gonna tell you though 'til after dinner. You gotta be in good condition to hear it."

Nora set the table in the dining room, Jack helping her. His movements were delicate, and he ran his fingers over the linen tablecloth as though he appreciated its texture. They ate mostly in silence. Jack smiled at her, his eyes shooting blue fire.

"Tell me, kid, what kind of parents did you have? They love ya? They still living? I don't want to intrude myself, but I wanna know."

"Yes, they're living, Jack. Daddy owns a hardware store in Cedarville. We don't see them much. They don't understand Nick very well and . . ."

"And he don't work at helping them. Right?"

"Right. That's true, Jack. He doesn't help much."

"But they love you. Write you letters. All that stuff?"

"Yes, I write every week. So does Father. Mother's hand is arthritic, and she usually adds a note. I'm the only child. They'd like us to have children, but you know Nick. He says he doesn't want children."

"Yeah, one baby's enough. When it's yourself. But, look, honey girl, let's clear up the dishes. That'll give us a chance to talk easier."

Together they took the dishes to the kitchen. Jack sat on a high stool, watching her draw water and put the dishes into the sink. He picked up the same drink, sipping it occasionally.

"You know, kid, I've been chasing my bum around the country since I was fifteen. I'm twenty-six now. That ain't old, but sometimes I feel I've seen it all. How old are you, kid?"

"Twenty-three. Nick's twenty-four. You remembered that?"

"Yeah, my kid brother. I feel I'd like to help Nick. I suppose I even love him. If I do love him, he's the only one I ever loved, unless it was Pop. Did Nick ever tell you about Pop?"

"Only that he didn't get along with your mother. He says your mother despised him."

"Yeah, she hated him, the poor old son-of-a-bitch. And she had every right to hate him. Sometimes I wish I could hate him too, but I can't. I don't even hate her any more. And she wasn't even my mother."

Jack stopped, looking at her. He rolled the glass between his hands, removing the film of moisture.

"I don't understand, Jack. She was your mother, wasn't she?"

"Naw. She wasn't mine and she wasn't Nick's. Pop had a little babe he was shacked up with. I don't even remember her name. My mother, and I don't know her name. She had the two of us. Then you know what she did? She died. Up and died. Leaving Pop with two little bastards. His weekend kids. Two little bastards. Jack and Nick."

Nora, studying Jack to see if he were telling the truth, stopped washing the dishes. He was telling the truth.

"Go on, kid, stay with the dishes. The water'll get cold.

It's an old story to me, and you'll get used to it, just like me."

"What did he do with you, take you to his . . . no, not to her!"

"Couldn't throw us away, could he? Yes, he made her a present of two little bastards. She had two kids of her own, Miles and Joseph. They weren't anything to be proud of, but at least they were hers. Us, we were Pop's and that little babe's he had shacked up with. Only she was dead."

"And Nick learned she wasn't his mother? That's what you're trying to tell me, Jack. Isn't it?"

"I dunno. He heard it, that's the truth. But whether he knows, I dunno. It was a Saturday night, and we were all having baths. Nick was nine. Curlyheaded and full of hell. I was still in the tub. Pop was washing my back. It was Miles who broke the news. I could hear him from the living room. *You're not my brother. You and Jack don't have no mother.* Some kid had told him. Something in his voice made you feel it might be true. I looked up at Pop. He was starting to cry. Pretty soon he was crying like a kid. Pop was a big guy, about two hundred and thirty pounds. Great sobs. I could hear Nick asking *her* whether it was true, and her not answering, not saying anything to him. Me, sitting there in that goddamn water, I was saying to myself, Boy, you're getting away first chance you get. The first chance was when I was fifteen. I've been moving ever since. Nick never said nothing about it to me, nor me to him. We slept together but neither of us ever mentioned it. Pop tried to make it up to us, but it was no go. Her, she just put the food on the table before us, and mostly kept her yap shut. She could be sarcastic, but mostly she said nothing. Whether she had hated us before Miles came through with his oration, I don't know. After that, she hardly said anything."

"And Nick never talked about it. Not even to you?"

"Naw, he was a pretty quiet kid then. There was a funny look on his face sometimes. After a while he got that swagger. You know the way he is when he's being dramatic as all hell. And then he got studious. Had his puss in a book all the time."

"It must have been a sad household, Jack, for all of you."

"Sad, baby, it was a morgue. I've been back a few times. I used to hate her, her sitting there as though she had watched a horse pee on her new shoes. But what the hell, I suppose it was really our fault. And Pop's. Passionate old Pop. Needing an extra piece of tail. Baby, you know I didn't go back when he died. I was nursing a grudge. But what the hell? When she dies, I might go back, if I have the chips for the fare. We're all poor slobs, her and Pop and me. And Nick too. But Nick is expecting somebody to make it all up to him. To patch it up, and start over. And you know what, kid?"

"No, Jack. What?"

"You're elected."

As soon as he said that, Jack had bounced out of his chair, saying he was going to catch a bus. There was always a bus heading out of town, and he was going to catch the next one.

"But what about Nick? He'll want to see you."

"Not this trip, kid. Let's keep it a secret. Okay?"

"Okay. And I'm grateful."

Jack kissed her on the cheek, opened the door, and was gone.

Nick came back the next night. He had offered no explanation, and she asked for none. She never did learn what had happened to the artist-photographer. Before long the atelier had become an insurance office.

And Nick took his M.A. He didn't go to the graduation exercises. But he did apply for a graduate assistantship at the university. That summer was peaceful enough. She

kept her job. Nick did a lot of reading, and got drunk only occasionally. One evening in September, she found him packing his suitcases. She asked what he was doing, and he said he was going up the river to get himself one of those Ph.D.'s some people got. "You keep the home fires burning, honey girl, and we'll see each other weekends." Nora had gone to her room and locked the door. She knew she was being tested again. In the morning, Nick was gone.

They hadn't seen each other weekends. But he wrote to her occasionally, usually postcards. As often as not he made an ironic comment on what he was doing at the university. He had come home during the Christmas holidays, and there seemed to have been no change in him. He was as dependent on her as ever, and his eyes told her he loved her as much as he always had.

Now they had come to this—Nick a near suicide. Nora was not prepared to say what was going to happen to them. Things couldn't go on the way they had been going. And now Nick had not only lost his job—he probably had ruined any chance he had had for an academic career.

Nora sighed. She had better try to sleep.

Don was waiting outside the hospital for Nora. A few minutes earlier he had phoned, asking if they might have a cup of coffee together. He didn't think they ought to talk in front of Nick. Nora had thanked him for calling and said she would appreciate his telling her whatever he could about what had happened. Okay then, Don had said, but how would he recognize her, what would she be wearing, and she had said she would carry her white gloves. He had got there within seven or eight minutes, parked, then stood in the street near the stairs to the hospital. When a young woman wearing a white hat and carrying white

gloves came out the door, he smiled and moved toward her.

"You must be Nora Remy."

"How-do-you-do, Mr. Chandler."

They shook hands. Don said they could go across the street to the White Tower. There wasn't any other place near by. That would be fine, she said. As Martha had guessed, Nora Remy was a pretty girl, and already Don knew that he liked her. No one else was at the counter. He ordered coffee for both of them. The conversation began tentatively, politely.

It was true, wasn't it, he asked, that Nick was not in any danger at all, the cuts were superficial? Yes, Nora said, there was really nothing to worry about. The doctor would probably discharge him tomorrow. She did hope to remain long enough to talk with Mr. Pomfret. He had phoned to say he wanted to talk with Nick, probably he'd be in during visiting hours this afternoon or this evening. Talking to Mr. Pomfret wouldn't do Nick any good, would it? Don said he didn't see any harm in talking with Pomfret. He, himself, always found the old man pleasant and helpful. That Pomfret and Nick hadn't hit it off especially well was Nick's fault, not Pomfret's. Yes, she knew that must be true. She had seen Nick with men like Pomfret. Something in him made him want to ridicule them. She was sorry but that was the way Nick was. But *why,* Don asked, was he that way? That's what everyone wanted to know. Nora hesitated.

Don threw the proper change on the counter and said if they walked down toward the river, they could talk more easily. Did she want to discuss Nick? If she did, Don was prepared to talk with her. But it was her affair and he wasn't going to intrude himself. Nora, closing her eyes, nodded her head, yes, yes, she said, they'd better talk about it.

Outside, he pointed toward the campus, saying the river was there, just below the hill. She looked at him and he was struck again with how very pretty she was. And not merely pretty, her manner and smile were pleasant and agreeable. Suddenly Don was angry with Nick again. Nick had no right to treat her the way he was treating her. He breathed deeply and then said sharply, "Why do you stay with Nick? Look at the way he treats you!"

Nora Remy blinked. She was startled by the suddenness of the question. "He's my husband, and . . ." She started to cry. Don Chandler took her arm, and they walked on in silence. There were only a few people on the street, mostly students.

The river appeared at the bottom of the long expanse of grass. Several couples were walking along the cinder path at the river's edge, and one couple were leaning against a little wooden fence and looking into the water. There was a bench close by, and Don suggested they sit there. After looking up and down the river, Nora's eyes rested on the graceful single span of bridge.

"It's very nice here. The campus is lovely."

"We like it, Martha and I. Oh, I should explain. Martha's mother is ill. That's why Martha wasn't able to come with me."

"Oh, I'm sorry. Serious?"

"Not now, I think. She's getting along all right. Anyhow, she's not our immediate problem, is she? It's Nick. But let me say it again. I'm an outsider, and I can keep my mouth shut about all this, if that's what you want. But I've been Nick's office mate all year. I do feel involved. And angry. Really angry. You must know that Nick is very bright. He could be a really distinguished scholar. What in hell's name is he trying to do! Another escapade like the one here, and he's dead academically. No campus would put up with him. Do you want to talk about it?"

Nora's eyes were on the white gloves she was holding loosely in her hands. When she spoke it was almost in a whisper.

"We are talking about it, aren't we?"

"Well then, what is it? What makes him act like such a fool?"

"I know what it is."

"You know what it is? Isn't it something you can do something about? Doesn't Nick know what it is?"

"I think he knows. I can tell you this. I can't leave him. Not now anyway when he's in trouble. Never, really. He has to know I'm there—and that I still love him."

"Mrs. Remy, you're going to have to excuse me for seeming stupid! What is love, a one-way street? It isn't just his life he's throwing away, it's yours too. I don't know what's eating him. Everyone has something gnawing at him. Maybe he was the youngest child and didn't get loved enough. Maybe his folks were a little nutty. He's got to take hold of himself. You've got to threaten him, and mean every word of it. You tell him the next time he goes out looking for a female that isn't named Nora Remy, or the next time he ties one of those loads on, that you're all washed up with him. *Kaput! C'est finis.* Nick, hit the road! Who the hell does he think he is, anyhow! Who in hell!"

Don Chandler had stood up during this and had put one foot on the bench. He was shaking his finger at Nora. There were tears running down her cheeks. He put his hand on her shoulder.

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Remy. I shouldn't have let myself be carried away."

"That's all right. But I want to ask you a question."

"Shoot. What is it?"

"What if Nick believed I meant it?"

"You'd better mean it!"

Nora Remy looked away. Don sat down beside her once more. They watched the couples walking along the cinder path. After a few minutes, Nora said she'd better be getting back to Nick.

Nora was sitting at the foot of Nick's bed, finishing a second cup of coffee, and Nick was smoking a cigarette leisurely, flicking the ashes onto the tile floor.

"Nick, is Don Chandler's mother-in-law very sick?"

"I don't know. She has a husband that would make anyone ill."

"Stop it, Nick. Don Chandler was obviously upset."

"He's the nervous type."

"Please stop it, Nick. And here, put this cup next to that ash tray you find so unnecessary."

Nick looked at her, mockingly penitent. He took the cup from her hand and put it on the night table. "Incidentally, my love, what were you and Eva gassing about so ardently when I was taking my blood bath?"

"About you. She told me about you."

"Oh, she did!"

"She told me about herself, but that meant she was saying a lot about you too."

"Sounds fascinating."

"In a way, yes. Eva was an ugly duckling, born when her parents were middle-aged. However hard her parents tried to evade the fact, the more evident it was to Eva. You know all that? Her father being a doctor, the sort of woman her mother was?"

"Yes, yes, my dear, but go ahead if it interests you."

"Nick, if you don't stop it, I might be provoked into saying something I'd rather not say. What I will say is that you seem to have gone out of your way to humiliate her."

"Now, now, Nora, don't exaggerate. I know her parents wanted to take the sting out of her being something this side of beautiful, but it don't take no great brain to see she ain't an intellectual. They should have seen that."

"The point, as you well know, is that you treated her very badly. Nick, you do understand?"

"Why, yes, I'm the sensitive type myself. I understand all about little Eva too. Attention, quiet, lights, camera! It was a warm sunshiny day, and Eva had as a visitor a college classmate of hers. She, the visitor, was engaged. Her young gentleman was to meet her at Eva's, but she was called home suddenly to attend her grandpère, who had suffered a stroke. She left, and the young man arrived, to be entertained by Eva. Mrs. Dobbsley serves them dinner, retires early, headache or the pathos of Eva attended by a young man belonging to another. Soft music, please. The young gentleman, let us call him Joe for short, had on his hip a flask of rum, and by nine o'clock or thereabouts they had pretty much killed it, sitting in the swing on the long veranda. Joe made a couple of passes, gentlemanly gestures, Eva believed, and when he became more attentive she attributed that to the rum and suggested a walk around the block. Having accomplished the walk, they came in via the rear way and sat under the apple tree. No blossoms, as I recall. This time Joe was more systematic. Nothing really happened, although it might have—except when they looked up, there was Mrs. Dobbsley, with flashlight and in her dressing gown, saying that the girl friend had just phoned to say her ancestor had joined his ancestors. The boy, Joe, said he thought he'd better be getting along down the big road. Mrs. Dobbsley, a lady of grace, charm and tact, made no mention of the scene, but Eva decided she'd better return to Middleton for summer school and an M.S. in library science. About a year later, Mrs. Dobbsley died suddenly. Eva rented the house to the new doctor

and his family, and she has been here since. Where she met me and asked to be told about the Big World."

Nora's shoulders had slumped slightly, but she lifted them and tossed her head back. "Nick, you understand so well and misrepresent so easily."

"That's part of my charm, part of the artist in me. If the inquiry board has finished, the patient would like permission to take a nap, recovery being just around the corner."

Nick lay back, his eyes closed, and his hands under his head. After a while, he opened his eyes. Nora was still sitting at the foot of the bed.

"Nora, tell me now, what do you think of your Nicky boy?"

"You're pretty awful, Nick. I don't know why I love you."

"Nora, who's the biggest nut you've ever known, bar none?"

"You, Nick."

"And you're not kidding, are you?"

"No, not kidding."

"Any hope for me? About being a nut, that is."

"I don't know, Nick."

"You think I like being a nut?"

"I suppose so."

"Otherwise I'd stop?"

"Yes, otherwise you'd stop."

"You think you know a lot about me, don't you?"

"Quite a lot, Nick."

"You think I like to show off?"

"Half of you likes it. The other half hates it."

"You think I like lifting skirts? Other skirts than yours, that is?"

"I guess so. But you also do it to show me you don't need me, even though you know you do need me. That's true, isn't it—you do need me?"

"Yeah, I need Nora. You're my real girl."

"Well, Nora knows what your trouble is, Nick. I have known for a long time."

"Indeed, Nora dear?" Nick smiled, and gestured, throwing his right hand up, as though to say the analysis could continue whenever Nora felt like it. He wasn't doing anything else, and chatter interested him, almost any kind of chatter. Nora got up and stood at the foot of the bed, facing him.

"Yes, Nick, I do. You are still in your nightgown that Saturday night when Miles told you who your real mother was. You are still nine years old, and even now you haven't quit trying to get even with the whole world. It is all right for you to seduce that girl in Elktown, and to make Eva's life a walking hell—but your father's doing what he did wasn't all right. He at least had the decency to be sorry for what he had done."

Nora's voice was tight and nervous, but she continued, "You, Nick, you make a shambles out of every room you enter, then you look over your shoulder to see whether Nora is still there smiling at you. Nick, I'm going out that door, right now, for a walk, a long one. I'll be back, but it may not be for good. When I come back I'm going to want to know whether it will always be the way it has been. Or different. That's for you to say."

Nick put his forearm over his eyes. Nora turned and went to the door. She stood there briefly, then left.

Don and Martha Chandler went up the front walk of Mr. Pomfret's house. They wanted to talk with him about Nick. It was out of the question that Pomfret had not heard about Nick's escapade and strange that no action had been taken by Dean Tilden. They could not begin to think about the future, either for Nick or themselves, until

they knew. Also neither he nor Martha could stand the suspense of not knowing what had been done.

Mrs. Pomfret, a tall woman with snow-white hair and a cheerful, rather impish, face, answered the door.

"Oh, Mr. and Mrs. Chandler, how nice to see you. Come in, do come in. How nice you look, Martha, in that candy-striped shirt. And the upswept hairdo. Most becoming."

"Thank you, Mrs. Pomfret, thank you very much."

Mrs. Pomfret ushered them into the living room and showed them to the sofa. She said she'd make some tea. She had just been thinking about making a cup for herself. Now she would have company and they could have a little chat. Opening her eyes wide and the raising her eyebrows, she said she could guess what was on their minds. "Mr. Remy. Yes, poor boy."

Don asked if Mr. Pomfret was at home. It was quite evident to him that Pomfret was not—but that seemed one way to get into the subject.

"No, no. As a matter of fact, he has gone to the hospital to see Mr. Remy. But, look now, let me make the tea, and then we can talk about it. Just excuse me a moment."

Mrs. Pomfret scurried toward the kitchen. Her guests looked about the room, with which they were familiar, awaiting her return. In a few minutes she was back and sat down opposite them. The water was on, and they would have their tea shortly. Mrs. Pomfret looked from one to the other before continuing.

"You know, it is perfectly shocking, what that young man did. But it is rather exciting too. You know once, a long time ago, a young instructor ran off with the wife of a colleague. Both of them left children. My, my, did the campus buzz for weeks. And you know what? Both of them came back and rejoined their spouses. Both families moved to other campuses. And you know what? Now all of them are grandparents, and thoroughly respectable too. What

possessed them I'll never know. No more than I know what possessed Mr. Remy!"

Don's voice was a little impatient when he answered her. "He was drunk. Very drunk."

"Yes, wasn't he, the poor dear boy! You remember how he was the first night he was here. My, was he drunk! You remember that, Martha!"

"Of course, Mrs. Pomfret. We took him back to the faculty club."

"Of course, you did. Ever since then, I've been wondering what would happen to him. You know what? Well, to tell the truth I'm rather a believer in happy endings. The old movies had something there. It is just as fatuous to think that all serious stories should have grim and sordid endings as it is to think they should all have happy endings. The truth is somewhere in between. Don't you think it is?"

Don, looking rather disconcerted, even unhappy, shifted his position. Then he said, "How about Eva Dobbsley? What's happened to her doesn't seem to promise a happy ending, not so far as I can see."

"Now, maybe so, Mr. Chandler. But she's learned something. Or we can hope she has. And maybe she'll find herself a young man yet. The kind who will marry her and settle down. I'd be surprised if this whole experience didn't serve to make her a better wife. There are lots of men in the woods. I'll bet she finds one of them. How about you, Martha, would you like Eva Dobbsley to go through her life in a wholly proper way? Would she be better off if she had never met Nick Remy, would she? Tell the truth now."

Martha smiled, and reached out for Don's hand.

"I'm inclined to agree with you," Martha said shyly. "You make it seem plausible."

Mrs. Pomfret settled into her chair. She was enjoying

the discussion. But she could see she wasn't getting very far in convincing young Mr. Chandler.

"Yes, but Mr. Remy! That's what you are thinking about, isn't it, Mr. Chandler? What is going to happen to him? When Charles left here a few minutes ago, he didn't give me any inkling of what he intends to do. So all of us are equally in the dark."

Mrs. Pomfret got up, saying she'd better bring in the tea. Don was biting his lip, getting ready to pose a question, and she waited until he asked it.

"But Nick's situation is different from Eva's, isn't it? He has a wife, and he has been involved in a public scandal. What chance has he got?"

Mrs. Pomfret clasped her hands and said, "Let's talk about *that* after I get us all some tea."

She turned and moved hurriedly toward the kitchen.

When Nora returned to Nick's room, she was with Mr. Pomfret. They had met outside the door, where Nora had been sitting after coming back from her walk. She had recognized him by the neat Vandyke.

"Ah, Nora," said Nick, "you bring a distinguished guest with you. Come in, come in."

Nick's tone was his usual one in speaking to administrators. He also gave his sidewise look at Nora, as though inviting her to consider whether her ultimatum was going to work or not. Without meeting his gaze, she sat at the foot of the bed. Pomfret extended his hand. Nick shook it dutifully, then gestured his guest into a chair.

As he sat down, Pomfret said, "How are you feeling, Mr. Remy?"

"I have returned from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, from those regions upon which only a few human eyes are allowed to gaze short of the last fateful journey, from . . ."

"Do you feel your fateful journey taught you anything, Mr. Remy?"

There was an edge to Pomfret's voice, and his hands clutched the arms of his chair. Clearly he was not disposed to listen to this young man's nonsense. Nora turned toward him apprehensively, then sharply back to Nick, who was already answering.

"Now, Mr. Pomfret, sir, don't lecture me. My dear spouse has been lecturing me. I find that sufficient. Sufficient for the day is the lecturing thereof."

Nick sighed. Both men were silent. Nora turned toward Mr. Pomfret, her eyes lowered.

"Mr. Pomfret, I want to say that I am thoroughly ashamed of what Nick has done. And I'm ashamed for myself, too. I'm not altogether sure how much of it is my fault. Some of it is, I know. But mostly it is Nick's fault. It is, isn't it, Nick?"

Nick was rubbing his left hand, massaging it, and he refused to look at her. The room was silent again. After a while, Mr. Pomfret spoke.

"Mr. Remy, I'm not going to moralize at you. If you don't understand what you've done, and the consequences of it, no one could possibly explain it to you."

"Yeah, Mr. Pomfret, I know the consequences—I'm fired. One is not to run around naked, especially not on the women's side of the faculty club. Rule two, never seduce librarians. And rule three, don't let your wife find out you've broken rules one and two. And . . ."

Nick's right hand had begun to gesture wildly. His face had gone rubbery, and his pale blue eyes were glazed. Turning away from both of them, he buried his face in the pillow. Nora moved closer to him and put her hand soothingly on his shoulder.

Mr. Pomfret got up, saying excuse-me-a-moment-please, and left them together. Seeing a water fountain at the end of the hall, he walked toward it slowly. He drank from

a paper cup, crushed it and threw it into the wastebasket, then he walked slowly to the room. Nora's hand was still on Nick's shoulder, but he seemed more composed and was looking out the window. Mr. Pomfret sat down and reached into his inside coat pocket for a long envelope.

"Mr. Remy, I'd like to say just one more thing."

Nick Remy's expression said he didn't see any point in their continuing to talk.

"Yes. What is it?"

"When I came in here a few minutes ago I didn't know what one might say about your future. One thing is certain, you have none here. But there are other places. In this envelope I have a letter from a man I've known a long, long time, Robert Jimson. He's chairman at the University of California at Berkeley. He wants several young men for next fall. To teach, and to work on their degrees. What do you think about applying, Mr. Remy?"

"You mean you'd recommend me!"

Mr. Pomfret smiled. "Let's say I'd offer my account of you. It might do the trick."

"Are they that hard up?"

"The truth of it is that Jimson was a little like you. Quite a while back. But he remembers it clearly enough. I think he'll take you."

"How do you know you can trust me?"

"I don't, for certain. But what if I should have helped you and I didn't?"

"You'd never know."

"No, I'd never know, and that might be worse than finding out, later on, that I was wrong to help you. What do you say?"

Nick Remy gave his sidewise look at Nora, then slapped his thigh.

"Jesus McGee, Nora! Can you see me playing the role of Reformed Character? Nick Remy, Good Citizen. Nick

Remy, Aspiring Scholar. Nick Remy, Devoted Husband. Nick Remy . . ."

Nora interrupted. "Nick, please. I can't see you not playing a role. I'd much prefer it be a pleasant role."

"See, Mr. Pomfret! She's my agent. I'll take the part. Soon as you can get the contract, I'll sign it!"

Mr. Pomfret got up from his chair. He shook hands with Nick, and said, "Let's hope the part doesn't overtax your abilities, young man."

Nick Remy, lifting his left hand to his heart, lay back against the pillow. "Mr. Pomfret, sir, we are in your debt."

Nora took Mr. Pomfret's extended hand. And she walked with him to the door.

"You'll have to forgive the manner, Mr. Pomfret. Nick isn't used to saying he's in anyone's debt. To say it, he has to get out in the middle of the stage and pretend he's John Barrymore playing Richard III. But I think he means it."

The two of them turned toward the bed. Nick's face, aping a Greek mask, registered comic and tragic emotions, but he was lifting and lowering his head, bowing his agreement.

The Contest

Occasionally when Mrs. Howard I. Long looked at herself in the mirror of the dresser, she saw a face bloated and blotched. The body under the bedclothes was fat. When she was younger she had been uncommonly pretty—she could remember this clearly enough. The severity of her dark hair, parted in the middle and drawn into a tight bun at the back, had not detracted from her ivory skin, black eyes, and white even teeth. Even her father, who did not like her, had known she was beautiful.

Mrs. Long looked down at her fat arm. There were red marks from the needle that Dr. Opdyke used for the Pentothal Sodium shots. Ordinarily she didn't talk much. Living with Howard, she had sometimes gone for weeks

hardly saying a word. And she knew none of the neighbors. Sometimes when the shots took effect she had the sense of floating in a river of words. Often her thoughts and replies seemed to flow into the river itself; the river she had known in Elizabethville. It was all downstream, floating, with the water enveloping her and holding her up.

From the beginning she had known where she was. Dr. Opdyke had been standing at the foot of the bed when she had awakened. "What am I doing in the booby hatch?" she had asked him. "We usually call it Ward 39," he had answered. "You were given something to put you to sleep. You slept all day and all night." They had had many talks since then, sometimes after a Pentothal Sodium shot. Most of his questions were about her and Howard. She tired easily and sometimes found it hard to answer him, although she had no objection to talking about herself and Howard.

Howard had moved to Elizabethville in his senior year in high school. His father, a carpenter, had had a bad back and did whatever work he could in a workshop he had built in his backyard. The first time she was really aware of Howard, other than as a boy in her class, was when he came to ask her father for a loan. He wanted to go to the university. Her father owned the hotel, the hardware store, and the garage that had been converted from a livery stable. All three were on Front Street. He was not wealthy except in comparison with people like Mr. Long. But he had enough money for "taking good moral risks" or "making investments in human futures." She had always hated phrases like that. As a matter of fact, she didn't like her father any better than he liked her. They were like oil and water. But he liked Howard, and he had lent him the money. After his first year, Howard earned his own way. By the end of his senior year, Howard had repaid the loan with interest. Howard and her father were strictly characters out of Poor Richard's Almanac.

When Howard came home that summer, her father invited him and his father to dinner. Howard had worn a stiff collar and a gray suit, with the pants a little too tight, and Mr. Long had on a shiny blue serge that must have been twenty years old. The old man couldn't keep his eyes off his son, and he had actually cried when he said goodnight and thanked her father for having helped Howard. Afterwards her father had not lectured her on her companions. A lecture was his usual evening entertainment for her. If he had known she kept a bottle in her room for solace late at night he'd have burst at the seams. She had learned to listen to his disapproval of her country club companions. At regular intervals she would say, "What was that you were saying, Father?"

Mrs. Long closed her eyes, and turned clumsily onto her right side. She tried to sleep but soon found herself looking into the mirror again. There were puffs of fat around both eyes, and the blotches on her cheeks were purplish. She sighed and turned on her back again.

She had married Howard because she was sure Ray Hemingway had made her pregnant. Her hands had clenched whenever she was with Ray. Once she had said something, she could no longer remember what—and he had slapped her hard. They had been sitting in his car on the road below the old clubhouse. A few minutes later he had most of the clothes off her. Every night thereafter for two weeks they drove off in his car. She could still remember his thin sardonic face and intense black eyes. She was quite certain they hated each other, but she would have married him.

One night he hadn't come for her, and she knew, without having to inquire, that he had left Elizabethville for good. During the following week, after dinner with her father in the dark-paneled dining room, she would strip and lie on her bed. Her breasts had seemed larger and firmer. It

was that same week that Howard and his father had come for dinner. During dinner, looking at Howard's scrubbed face, she realized she must be pregnant. It hadn't occurred to her before.

Marrying Howard had been easy. In saying good-by after dinner, she had held out her hand. He had taken it, looking at her shyly. The next afternoon he had stopped by. It had been clear to her that Howard did not have a girl friend at the university. He managed only the simplest sentences. Three evenings later they walked around the reservoir outside of town. She brushed against him several times, and when they sat down she leaned lightly against him. When he tried awkwardly to put an arm around her, she put her head on his shoulder and breathed against his neck and ear. Two days later they were engaged. If one of her country club friends had asked her how she had done it, she'd have said, "It was like Pola Negri captivating a farm boy who was visiting a Paris café on his first army leave." She had been quite a wit at the time. After her marriage, nothing seemed amusing.

Howard had rented a car so they could drive up to the university to be married. He had wanted to be married right away, and he wanted them married in the university chapel. She had wanted it right away too, and she preferred not to be married at home. They had come into town along River Boulevard. She had been to the university only three or four times, for football games. She did not know the town well, but she liked it better than Elizabethville. Any place was better than Elizabethville.

Two friends of Howard's had met them at the chapel, Joanne Somebody and Tom Somebody. She never tried to remember the names of Howard's friends. Everything had been arranged, and they went in and got married. Afterwards, the four of them went to the Campus Inn. Miss Joanne Somebody had tried to talk with her about some

prize or scholarship Howard had won, and Mr. Tom Somebody had offered a toast, something about newlyweds. All of them drank martinis. After several, she didn't even pretend to listen. The three of them chattered on. She had studied Howard a little. He had on one of his stiff collars, and he was close-shaven. Somehow the main impression she had then, and later, was that Howard was remarkably clean. He had to help her to their room. He had undressed her and put her into bed. The next day she could remember his white skin getting into bed beside her, but she could not remember whether he had touched her, or she him. She never did know. The next morning she was menstruating.

Dr. Opdyke said it was then that she began to hate Howard. If she was going to get better she had to recognize that she hated Howard. He had repeated that several times. She needed to hate somebody, and Howard was right there—so she hated him.

Before returning to Elizabethville, Howard had walked her over to an office in one of the buildings on campus. He was to share it with two graduate fellows in political science. She had asked Howard if that meant they were going to stay at the university.

"Of course, my dear. I told you. I'm afraid you don't always listen." That was true, she didn't always listen. She liked it better not listening.

They had also gone to see the new library building, but one book at a time was more than enough for her. She had said she needed fresh air.

Howard had been quiet on the trip back. They were to stay a few days with her father before returning to a small furnished apartment the Somebodys had found for them. Both their parents had been there to meet them and wish them happiness. Howard's father shook hands with her and said he hoped they would be very happy. He had

patted his son on the arm. Then he left. Her father had smiled as best he could and was especially cordial to Howard. At dinner he had asked Howard questions about the fellowship and what he planned to do later on. Howard had answered politely.

Howard was always polite. Dr. Opdyke had often said to her that she didn't like that in him, and she always said no she didn't like it. She didn't like it at all.

After dinner Howard had excused himself and had gone up to their room. She and her father had sat in the living room, with the multicolored glass lamp and table between them. She had no intention of volunteering any information. She had left a note when they went off to get married, so he could have interfered had he wanted to. Probably he was glad to be rid of her. But that wasn't what was on his mind. When he spoke, he said, "Why did you marry that boy?" She had leaned forward in her chair and turned her head so he could see her clearly. "Because he asked me to." She later viewed that reply as one of the high points in her relation with her father.

She and Howard had lived in two rooms with a small kitchenette. Every night Howard put his books and a notebook on a shiny mahogany table and studied. He had explained to her that he wanted to get his Ph.D. What anybody wanted with one, she couldn't hope to understand, but that was his affair. She heard someone refer to getting one as the pursuit of the phud—and that's what she always called it, his phud. There were three movie houses near the campus, and the pictures changed every four days. They kept her evenings full. No one ever came to visit them, not even the Somebodys. When she had asked about them, Howard had said they thought she didn't like them. "Don't like them! They just don't interest me, that's all." "It comes to the same thing," he had said.

Howard didn't much interest her either. He always had

his head in a book. There just wasn't anything exciting about him. He didn't even have a temper. The first month they were married she threw a cup, a plate, and a saucer at him. The plate broke against his chin, cutting him. He didn't blink, and he didn't get angry. He had said, "I should think you'd be ashamed of yourself." Then he had gone out. That night she had let him make love to her, but she had kept her body limp and unresponsive. She'd have much rather had a pillow make love to her.

Later that week she had let a couple of fellows pick her up in a neighborhood bar, a place that had green lights, was dirty, and was a hangout for students. After a movie, she usually dropped into that bar for a few drinks—always gin, because she liked its sickish odor. The two fellows were usually there, and she had a nodding acquaintance with them. That night they joined her as she was leaving. "Why not come home with us?" the taller, dark-haired one, had said. "Why not?" she had answered, and she took his arm, and the arm of the shorter one, who wore glasses. Their room, an attic over a bookstore, was large and untidy. Papers were scattered on a desk, an old high typewriter was on a chair, with a half-opened can of salmon on it, dirty socks were on the floor, and a coffee pot sat on the gas ring. There were two army cots. "Buster," she said to the taller one, "you sit over there in the corner and read a book." He retreated backwards and slid down against the wall. The other one put his glasses on the window sill, then helped her undress. As she watched him undress she tried unsuccessfully to imagine he was Ray Hemingway. He had been clumsy with her, and she told him to quit. She told the tall one he couldn't try. Neither offered to walk her home, but they took her to the top of the dark stairs. "Thanks," the tall one said. "For nothing," she said, over her shoulder. When she got home, Howard was asleep. She took off her clothes again and studied her-

self in the dingy mirror of the dresser. Her body no longer interested her. She was through with men—and this included Howard.

The next day her back ached, and she stayed in bed. Howard had three different doctors in to examine her. None of them could find out what was wrong, but they all admitted that back ailments were hard to diagnose. Howard served her meals in bed, bathed her, brought her magazines—and slept on the couch. He spent as much time as possible in his office and at the library. But he bought two dachshunds for her as company. She stayed in bed pretty regularly for the next three years.

Dr. Opdyke said there had never been anything wrong with her back. She knew that? Yes, she knew it. And Howard's accepting it as a true ailment hadn't made her like him any better, had it? No, she couldn't imagine Howard doing anything that would make her like him any better. He liked being virtuous. That was Howard, Mr. Virtuous.

Her father had come as infrequently as possible to visit her. Howard's father never came. On his last visit, in midsummer, her father said to her, "What are you trying to do to that boy, destroy him?" "I'm the sick one," she said. "Look, I'm in bed." He shook his head and tried again. "Howard did so well with his degree that he was appointed to the staff." "Yes, he got his phud, and now he's going to help others get their phud." Her father got up and left. The next time she heard about him he was dead. Howard went to the funeral. When he came back he told her that her father had left the hotel and other properties to her. There was a manager, and he would send her a monthly check. "Now we can get out of this dump," she had said.

Dr. Opdyke had asked her whether she knew her father had told Howard that he would not oppose their getting

a divorce. No, she hadn't. Dr. Opdyke added that Howard was the sort who felt that understanding and sympathy might solve their difficulties, and he had chosen to stay with her. Dr. Opdyke said Howard was wrong in sympathizing with her. What she needed was firm opposition. She had been neurotic before they left the apartment. In the big house she had lived in a neurotic nightmare.

They had rented a house. It was on River Boulevard. Howard insisted on paying the rent himself. So she sent her monthly checks to a bank. After a while she felt she had too much money there, so she had Howard open other accounts for her. She kept all the little books locked in the drawer of her night table. She knew she had a lot of money, but she never counted it to discover the total. Mostly she cared about her bed. It was a big one, with many silk coverlets.

Dr. Opdyke had said that Howard had come to see she was faking. She knew that? Yes, she knew that, but Howard liked being used as a mop. No, no, Dr. Opdyke had said. He had done what the spouses of neurotics did all too frequently—he had indulged her. Her sensitive skin period was a result of his indulgence.

One morning when Howard was bathing her, she had said she could no longer stand soap and water. Howard would have to get her oils and skin creams. Her skin had become too sensitive for soap and water. Howard bought oils, perfumed and unperfumed, and of various consistencies. And he bought jars and tubes of cream. After awhile she had several shelves filled with oils and creams. Then she no longer wanted Howard to bathe her. She bathed herself. She even bathed the two dachsunds, and combed their fur until it shone. It was in bathing herself that she got over her back trouble. She'd get up to get Turkish towels from the bathroom to spread on the bed. One morn-

ing she had to go to the basement where several of them were drying. She decided to dress and stay up.

Howard had made no comment when he came home and saw her dressed and in the living room. "You're not surprised to see me up?"

"Not really. I thought you'd get up when it suited you. In fact, I've decided to let you do whatever you want to do. You don't want any help from me. I don't even know why you married me."

Dr. Opdyke had said Howard should have said this to her when they were first married. He had waited too long. She had treated him as an object. Now he was confronting her as a person. In her state, she did not know how to react or respond intelligently. She chose to shock him. This had brought her to an acute stage, hastening her breakdown.

Mrs. Long was sweating. She sat up in bed, reached over and rang for the nurse. She pushed her hair back. In a short time, the nurse opened the door and asked what she wanted.

"I want a rub with alcohol. I feel nervous."

"I'll be right back and take care of it, Mrs. Long." And the door closed after her.

Her shocking Howard had taken different forms. She bought, or had him buy, two or three dachshunds at a time. Eventually she must have had fifteen of them. The two Howard had given her had grown fat, and they dominated the others, seeing that none of them left the sun porch. Only they had the run of the house. The sun porch was covered with sawdust, the dogs' dishes and the boxes for them to sleep in. They waddled back and forth across the room as though they were fat old ladies in a rest home. She had names for all of them. Howard asked if he might cut a little door in the wall for them to

go in and out. She'd said yes and after he had done it the dogs moved in and out all day and night. There were some fights, but the two oldest dogs waddled in quickly and nipped the offenders. None of this seemed to bother Howard. He spent only a few hours at home, and most of these were in his own room sleeping. They never ate together.

Dr. Opdyke had said Howard knew she was trying to injure him, even though he didn't know why. By this time, he had stepped aside, out of harm's way, and watched. Neither he nor any of his friends knew where it might end. They knew it could not go on long.

The next stage had been her getting fat. She had collected books with recipes for candy, chocolates, bonbons, fudge, taffy. Before long the house smelled of syrup and sugar, and even the dachshunds seemed to lift their paws higher, as though the floor itself were sticky. There was candy in plates, saucers, and baskets. It was all over the house. And she had eaten it until she was sick. When she neglected the dogs, Howard fed them when he came in at night. Day after day, she cooked and she ate. At first she didn't get fat. Then quite suddenly she began to gain. She had to get new clothes. She almost never went out, but one day she did; she went down town and bought the new clothes. The campaign had taken about three months, and during that time she had avoided Howard and had seen him only from behind doors and from her window as he left for the campus in the morning. One night after he was in bed, she went to his door and knocked. He put on the light. She entered, letting her robe fall to the floor. Her breasts were like melons, loose flesh hung from her arms and face, there were rolls of fat across her chest and stomach, and her buttocks were huge.

"Do I suit you better this way, Howard?"

"You look fine," he said, "perfectly fine." And he had reached over and pulled off the light.

The nurse opened the door. She had a bottle of rubbing alcohol in her hand, and a heavy towel. "Sit up now, Mrs. Long," she said, and she helped her take off the hospital gown. "Lie down now. That's the girl." The nurse spilled handfuls of alcohol onto her skin and rubbed vigorously. Mrs. Long closed her eyes.

The rubbing alcohol reminded her of gin and the drinking that had followed the candy debauch. She had bought gin by the case, and had drunk it in water glasses. When she sat or moved or went to bed there was always a glass in her hand. There were bottles opened and unopened, half-finished and empty on tables, window sills, and even on the floor. She sat in front of the hall mirror waiting until her image doubled. Sometimes she had thrown a full glass at the mirror and watched her image distort and twist through the spilled liquid. When she awoke in the morning she was usually still drunk from the night before. She had stopped taking baths, and she had worn only a dirty terry cloth robe. The two dachshunds had avoided her and they no longer supervised the sun porch. The other dogs took to going any place in the house. Usually a half dozen followed her about like a retinue. One day she decided to walk around the block, something she had never done before. Not only the retinue had followed but many of the others too. She might have been a priestess on her way to a temple in an ancient fastness in pre-Christian Central Europe where dachshunds were inviolable and sacred. Dusk was settling, and no one was on the street. She circled the block and was nearing the house when Howard saw her. He was coming, brief case in hand, from the other side. He took her by the arm and walked her quickly into the house. The dogs were left standing on the lawn. They began to whimper and cry, and Howard let them in before he led her upstairs to bed.

When she was in bed, Howard sat on a chair looking

at her. They hadn't talked for months. Finally Howard said, "What is it you want?" "Right now, Howard?" "Now, or anytime. What is it?" "That's sweet of you, Howard. I'll tell you what I want. We'll go down to the living room and get all the dishes and glassware we can find. You stand at one end of the room and I'll stand at the other. And we'll throw them at each other until one of us has had enough. Please, Howard." She had got up and staggered toward the door but fell to one knee. Howard walked past her and closed the door as he left the room. She spent the night on the floor.

The next morning, hearing him get up, she got dressed hurriedly and followed him downstairs. He was dressed for the street. "You don't want to talk about it, Howard?" "Not now," he said, and went out. She followed, pulling at his sleeve. "Go back to the house," he said, pushing her away. She got down on her knees, trying to put her arms around his legs and hold him. "Howard, Howard, you must." He pulled away, and she threw herself on the sidewalk. Howard went back into the house. In a few minutes an ambulance had come. Howard helped the two young men hold her on the stretcher until they strapped her to it.

Dr. Opdyke had said he didn't think she and Howard should see each other again. He'd advise a divorce. He had talked it over with Howard, and Howard agreed. She wasn't afraid of living alone? No, she wasn't afraid. She'd been alone a long time. That was one thing she understood, being alone.

The nurse said, "Please roll over now, so I can do your back." Mrs. Long rolled over, and the nurse splashed a handful of alcohol on the small of her back. Mrs. Long could feel that fat move downward toward her buttocks, and upwards toward her shoulder blades.

A Case of Moral Turpitude

Michael Jones was sitting with his wife Marie in the president's box in the huge auditorium. The orchestra had just finished playing Beethoven's "Fifth," and there was the usual bustle and murmur of voices and the click of seats springing upward as many of the audience moved toward the foyer to smoke their cigarettes and chat before returning for the final selection, after which there would be the usual applause with the conductor walking to the wings and returning, doing both several times, then bowing to the first violinist and asking the orchestra to rise. There was a lot of bowing and fancy-dressing that went with a symphony performance. Michael Jones thought of it as another of civilization's ceremonies or rituals. He

agreed with one of his favorite writers that "Civilization is an agreement not to look over the abyss." Tonight he had been thinking about the program notes, which seemed to make more sense than they usually did.

"Darling," Marie said, touching him on the arm, "don't you want to go out for a cigarette?"

"No, I certainly don't!" he said, but added almost at once, "Excuse me, Marie. I just don't want to talk to anyone. You understand why."

"Is it because of Gerald?"

"That's right."

Marie was ordinarily a little ahead of his explanations, and, at certain moments, he admitted to himself she'd be a better chairman than he was. Being chairman was really being in charge of human relationships, and she was better at these than he was. He had been chairman for only one semester, but he had learned more about members of the department in a few months than he had known in all of the fifteen years before. There was always someone who had a very plausible, or implausible, reason why a rule couldn't apply to him or her or to so-and-so. Not long ago, while listening to a woman associate professor, he had found himself writing on a scratch pad, *A fact is a fact is a fact,* but he had ended the interview saying he would call a meeting of the full professors to present her case to them. Her case! He had said, "We'll see what they have to say." During the same weekend her office mate had invoked the aid of her psychiatrist to force the department to let the associate professor keep her two sections of the History of the Modern World. A new and gifted young scholar was a specialist in the field, but she wasn't giving ground to anyone. The matter was still unsettled. And there was the young instructor, still working on his Ph.D., whose wife could not understand why he had to give any of his evening hours to preparing his classes for the next day.

The young man, with lips tight, had said, "She wants to know what I've been doing all these years if I don't know enough to be able to teach without studying every night!" And so it went. Or so he sometimes felt.

He had to admit that the work of the department did get done. One of their men, Professor Gray, had received an award from the Society of American Historians for the most distinguished monograph on colonial history published during the past year. Professor Collins had won a Pulitzer and had another major study nearing completion. Others had done good work too. If only the emotions and private lives of some of them would not intrude so into their professional work. Now it was Gerald McCaffery, one of their best men. He would have to resign. President Torrence had said there was no other way, and Michael knew there was none. Gerald knew it too.

The audience was filing back now, and there was the tuning up of strings, rustling of scores, and movement of chairs on the stage. Professor Jones looked at the program again. It was to be Mozart's "Jupiter Symphony." He sighed and settled more deeply into his seat. Marie reached over and patted his arm. The conductor came striding out. He was an ill-formed man, who walked like a scarecrow with powerful muscles, and when he bowed one wondered if he would be able to return his large heavy head to an upright position. Yet he was said to be among the two or three best conductors in the country. His back was to the audience now, and down came the baton. The music moved out over the heads of the people downstairs and rolled upward into the balcony, flooding the whole auditorium.

Professor Jones had always liked this symphony, but tonight he was not so sure. It was majestic, controlled, and ambitious, without meaning to be ambitious. He remembered something Gerald McCaffery had once said: The

chief historical phenomenon of the modern world is the European; the man who has pushed out over the whole world conquering and bringing enlightenment. The paradox is this business of being an enlightened conqueror. Being enlightened doesn't always go hand in glove with being a conqueror. All systems, however enlightened, injure someone.

This symphony had the godlike assurance of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe. Beethoven was more honest. He said something about the tug, the struggle between the civilized and the uncivilized, the primitive working like a leaven inside the civilized. Civilization depended on compromises, on meting out punishments as well as rewards. As Michael Jones understood it, the "Fifth Symphony" cast its vote for civilization but warned that civilization had come only recently and would never come entirely, could never be absolute. He tried to relax in the rolling majesty of Mozart's music.

When the "Jupiter Symphony" was nearing its end, he turned to Marie. She lowered her head. He said, "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean." Marie pulled back slightly, startled at hearing something fanciful from the lips of her husband. Quietly, she replied, "Yes, darling, it rolls on."

Then it was over, and they were filing out, moving slowly up the stairs to the upper foyer. In the press of people, there were mixed odors of cigarette smoke, perfumes and faded eau de cologne, and from a man immediately in front of Professor Jones the odor of a freshly dry-cleaned suit. Ordinarily he was not especially aware of the physical world, but he was tonight, and he supposed it all went back to Gerald. Someone was tapping him on his left arm and he turned to see Thomas Arnold.

"What were you and madam doing in the president's box, if I may ask?"

"I'll tell you downstairs, when we get out of this crowd."

Arnold was the dapper type, with a thin mustache, bow ties, neat salt and pepper coats, plus the badge of the profession, gray flannels. He was the bachelor upon whom hostesses could depend. He told the women how delightful their gowns were, he knew campus gossip, never drank too much, and always left shortly after ten. He amused himself by playing chess and cards. Michael Jones had no real affection for him, but he supported him in department affairs. Arnold did his job, and if he had any neuroses he left them in some closet in his apartment, arriving on campus without them.

Marie was several yards ahead, and Arnold had caught up with her. He would be telling her how charming her hat was and how well she looked. And of course he was right.

At fifty, Marie was still pretty. In recent months he had had several occasions to think about what he had heard someone call the "marriage mart," and he knew that in Marie he had been most fortunate. They had not had children, and he noticed that Marie sometimes hugged other people's children impetuously and tightly. Otherwise, everything had gone well for them.

Downstairs, he caught up with Marie and Arnold, and three abreast they walked out the great central doorway and down the broad granite steps. The floodlights played upward on the granite columns and cast shadows against the dark brick wall. The grass stretching away from the broad sidewalk was brilliantly green in the artificial light.

Arnold, still holding Marie's arm, turned toward him. "I take it you've seen Torrence about Gerald."

"Yes, this afternoon. He sent for me. He said he was sorry about McCaffery but had no choice but to ask for his resignation. The story was in last night's paper. It is a clear-cut

case of moral turpitude, and of course, McCaffery has had to resign. As I was leaving he handed me the tickets for the symphony. He's on his way to Chicago for a conference."

Professor Jones was not critical of Torrence's action. Torrence was a large man, with all the dignity that went with his job. But he was fair-minded and generous. He had listened patiently and sympathetically. Finally he had said, yes, it was clear to him that McCaffery was an outstanding scholar, but there was nothing he or any other administrator could do under the circumstances. McCaffery would have to try to take up a career elsewhere. In shaking hands, Torrence had turned his eyes away, as if he were ashamed of what he had to do.

Arnold and Marie were waiting for Michael to continue. It was Arnold who put the question. "Did you *know* he was a homosexual?" And he emphasized the word.

Jones looked sharply at Arnold. The question was one he had not wanted to hear. "No, I didn't," he answered abruptly, "but I suppose now we'll hear there were many signs of it."

Arnold drew back, as though accused of an offense he had yet to commit, but he recovered quickly and asked, "Where is Gerald, at home?"

"Yes, he's out on bail."

"You know," Arnold said, "it may be one thing to arrest a man who molests minors, but to plant a detective in a men's room and have him make the advances, that's pretty awful!"

"I think so too," Marie said. "Poor Gerald, he's always been so discreet." Professor Jones looked at her sharply, realizing that she had known. He turned toward Arnold again.

"I spoke to the chief of the morals squad, Detective Cas-

sidy," he said. "I asked if he thought it was the job of the police to frame people. Cassidy said, 'We don't write the laws; we just enforce them. Your friend went to a hotel room with the detective, didn't he? We have to use our methods for locating them fairies. Some of these psychology boys say fairies are sick. Maybe they are. Maybe there always will be fairies. I'm not a professor, so I don't understand these things. I do what the law says. He's guilty.'" Jones shook his head and shrugged.

Professor Arnold smiled faintly, wished them good night, and started off in his jaunty manner. Michael and Marie saw him wave to someone at the far end of the esplanade, then quicken his pace. Gerald McCaffery's tragedy was a slight ripple on the surface of his day.

"I suppose I don't really like Arnold," Michael Jones said, taking his wife's hand. They walked toward the parking lot. "Such a damn chatterbox."

"He isn't as serious as you are, dear," and her fingers tightened in his.

They walked quietly toward the car. The spring air was fresh and warm. The parking lot was almost empty, and the moonlight gleamed on their car. He opened the door for Marie, as he always did, and she said what she always said, "Thank you, Mike." Then he walked around to the other side and got in himself. He was a heavy man and getting in behind the wheel was an effort for him.

"Mike, darling," Marie said, touching him on the forearm, "Let's go see Gerald."

"I don't know that that's wise, dear. If you'd been in police court this morning you'd know how broken up he is. There were drunks, wife-beaters, petty thieves, and prostitutes. All of them walked in together."

"And Gerald, he was with them. That's why we should see him."

"All right."

Professor Jones started the motor, raced it a little, backed up and pulled out into the street.

"Was the judge harsh with him, Mike?"

"No, I don't think so. I think he has a sense of humor." And Michael grunted, remembering something. "Just before Gerald, there was a streetwalker. The cops had picked her up in one of the hotels on Y Street. She must have weighed three hundred pounds. Her lawyer said that if the judge would release her she would go to the courthouse with her fiancé and get a marriage license. The fiancé, he said, was present in the courtroom, and the judge asked that he stand in front of the bench. The lawyer motioned for him. He was there all right. He was a skinny stew-bum, dressed in blue denim. He must have weighed in at a third of her weight. Standing next to her he was a mere sliver. The judge questioned him for several minutes. Then he lifted the gavel, smiling all the while at the lawyer. As it struck he said, 'Sixty days in the workhouse!' " Michael Jones chuckled.

"Then it was Gerald's turn," he said quietly. "The judge listened to the detective. He asked Gerald how he wanted to plead. Gerald said he was guilty. The judge set the bail. That's all there was."

"And you weren't able to talk with him?"

"He didn't want to talk with me. When I went up to the desk to pay the bail, the clerk said Gerald did not want me to wait for him. 'They're all alike,' he said. 'They always sign a confession, then go look for a hole to crawl in.' "

Michael Jones turned into University Lane. Gerald lived there, at the far end.

"Oh, Mike," Marie said, "it's horrible."

"We'll stop, Marie. We'll do what we can."

"Mike, I've just remembered something." Marie's voice was strange. "That party Miss Tilman gave, when they

both lived in the same apartment house. You remember—she tried to kiss him. I've never seen him look so distressed. That must have been ten years ago. The poor man. He must have hated it."

"Yes, I remember, dear."

The car stopped in front of Gerald's house. It was a small neat house set far back in the lot. There were no other houses close to it. Professor Jones moved heavily as he reached over to open the door for his wife, then edged out on his own side. As he got out he saw a rabbit halt in the glare cast by the headlights of his car. He reached in and turned off the lights, and the rabbit bounced down the driveway toward the back of Gerald's house.

"Mike," Marie said, "there's no light in the house, but there seems to be a light in back, on the patio. We can walk around the side."

Michael Jones followed her. The window shades were all down. As they reached the patio they could hear a slight wind rustling throughout the grove of maple trees. The arc light attached to the corner of the house was on, and its brightness made both of them blink. The light played directly on a marble slab set on iron legs that served as a table. On it were a small bottle of perfume, a box of face powder, and a small hand mirror. The powder had been spilled.

Marie went over toward the table, saying, "Oh, goodness, Mike, you don't suppose that . . ."

Michael Jones started to answer her, but he was distracted by a movement near the garage. It was the rabbit leaping through a barberry bush and heading toward the little grove of maple trees, chased by a huge black tomcat. It was as the cat raced under the middle tree that Michael Jones saw the figure swinging. It had on a dress and silk stockings. One shoe had fallen off. He could not see the face, but he knew it must be Gerald. He felt his stomach

muscles contract and his legs were cold. Instinctively he turned toward Marie, hoping to get her away before she saw it. But she had seen it too. Her left hand was pressed over her forehead and eyes, and she was reaching blindly toward one of the chairs. Her hand missed it and she fell. Only then did her husband feel he might be able to move, and he started stiffly toward her.

A Matter of Principle

Every evening at ten o'clock, whether in rain, sleet or snow or a clear sky above, Calvin Murdoch put the leash on Beowulf's collar, opened the door, called to Emily that he'd be back soon, and started out on his walk. Tonight was no exception. It was sleeting, but out they went. Beowulf, a huge black Labrador, skidded on the sidewalk outside the door, his heavy long legs going every which way, and Calvin pulled on the leash, steadying himself as well as the dog. After a few yards Beowulf and his master adjusted to the icy sidewalks. Ordinarily Beowulf pulled hard at the leash, enjoying the struggle with his master, but tonight he did not pull so hard. It was a cold December night, with Christmas only a few days away, and there

were little patches of snow on the grass and in the street. Most houses had illuminated decorations in the windows or on the front door.

The Murdochs lived in the area called Faculty Park, bordered on one side by the river and on the other by open country. In the very center of the Park was a huge water tower atop Tower Hill. It could be seen for miles. At night the tower was lit and could be seen even on the far side of the river. It was a beacon for tired and sometimes woozy drivers. Throwing its light into the darkness, the tower was a promise of home and warmth.

There was a lot of party-giving and party-going in the Park and out of it, especially at this time of year, more by far than suited Calvin Murdoch. He enjoyed a Scotch and soda, and a small group of friends sitting together in front of a fireplace. He disliked big parties, especially stand-up parties. Clarence Dille, a colleague of Calvin's, was a great party-giver, and tonight he was giving another. The Dilles lived two blocks from the Murdochs, in a large white house with a huge picture window and a large glassed-in porch at the side. There were cars lining both sides of the street in front of their house, and Calvin pulled harder on Beowulf's leash, slowing him down as they walked past. The sleet had made his eyes run, and he blinked the tears away trying to see into the living room. A man's broad back was filling most of the window and he had an arm around a woman in an evening dress. The party was probably reaching an advanced stage. But it was a cold night and the house, with lights on in every room, seemed gay and bright. He would have felt more tolerant of the party had he not caught sight of Gregory Hollingsworth, glass in hand, charming Rita Dille. They were standing alone on the porch.

Hollingsworth was in academic life because it was a

career, like the diplomatic service or some other prestigious profession. He had begun at Harvard but not being a sufficiently able scholar had not been given tenure. Calvin's department hired him as a replacement for a man on sabbatical leave. The man had gone to Princeton at the end of his sabbatical, and Hollingsworth had been kept on in his place. He was a charmer, or, viewed in another way, an operator.

Calvin had neither the taste nor the talent for department politics, preferring to spend his free hours in the library or at home. He had published three books. All of them had been favorably reviewed in scholarly journals and one, the second, had been given a full page article-review in the *Times Literary Supplement*. Hollingsworth, on the other hand, gave his time to committees, especially those appointed by the dean. He was agreeable, handsome, and smiled easily. For the past year he had been chairman of the committee-at-large, the group closest to the dean. Recently there had been rumors that the dean might appoint Hollingsworth chairman of their department. It was the dean's feeling that chairmen should be young, thereby bringing vigor and vision into the functioning of the university. Calvin had at first dismissed the rumor. It was inconceivable to him that a man of such small scholarship could be appointed chairman. Besides he was a rank opportunist. But a talk with his office mate and neighbor, Jack Ervine, had changed his mind. "Calvin, old boy," Jack had said, "you're not keeping up. Hollingsworth belongs to the present. This is the age of the Organization Man. Your inner ear is attuned to wave lengths emanating from the library. Our boy Hollingsworth's ear is attuned to the hum you hear in the corridors of all big institutions, including this one." Calvin had been disturbed, but in going about his daily routine he had been able almost to

forget Hollingsworth. Now in his mind's eye he could see his smile, ingratiating and insincere. Calvin shivered involuntarily.

Just beyond the Dille house Beowulf stopped, his body stiffening and a growl forming and growing in his throat. Calvin saw that he had caught sight of a small cat standing in the middle of the street. The cat's back was arched. Calvin took the end of the leash and swatted Beowulf on the rump. "Quit it, boy," he said. "Move, get along with you." Beowulf's body relaxed, and he loped slowly, pulling his master after him. Soon they came to the dead end where Calvin and the dog usually stopped. Several hundred yards away, down in a valley, was the river. Calvin often stood there, meditating.

He put his foot up on the bench and looked out at the river. He had grown up in a little town farther down the river. His father, a minister, had been a kind but reserved and undemonstrative man. His mother he remembered mostly for her patience. Calvin had attended a church college, then gone to Iowa and later Chicago for his advanced degrees. His memories of his childhood were not many, but he knew he had grown up in a household where hard work and self-respect were such self-evident virtues that no one had occasion to mention them. Even now, after many years away from his parents—they were long dead—he found it all but impossible to compromise with any of his obligations. Emily teased him about his preference for eight o'clock classes, and although he knew there was no moral law that said he had to get up early he always did. Once the *Campus Daily* had published a humorous story about his marching from the podium at eight sharp and locking the door so that late students could not enter. He had laughed at the story—but he continued to lock the door.

Emily had an easy, natural graciousness, and, unlike him,

laughed easily. He supposed this had been fundamental in the attraction she had had for him, and still had. Emily bought him checkered sports coats and brightly colored vests, and he wore them even though he felt that his pink skin and bald head, framed with white hair, were incongruous in such outfits. He had no desire to be what Emily called "a stick." Beowulf was a part of Emily's lifelong campaign to reduce the amount of starch in his make-up, and although he had at first felt silly walking the dog, he had taken him out every night. "Every night," Emily often said, "come hell or high water!"

Emily had shrugged off Calvin's fear of Hollingsworth and what he stood for. "There will always be scholars like you, dear, and charmers, like your *bête noire,* Mr. Hollingsworth." "But his being made chairman," Calvin had said, "that's a scandal!" "Of course," Emily had answered, "but he must have some virtues. He doesn't have a wife but if he did I daresay he wouldn't beat her."

Calvin took his foot down from the bench. It was time to start back. Emily would be in bed. She always awaited his return and invariably had two glasses of Scotch-on-the-rocks on the night table between their beds. Calvin turned toward Beowulf who had been sitting patiently on the icy brick roadway. "C'mon, boy, let's go."

It had stopped sleeting, and the moon was huge in the sky, casting shadows on the road. Dog and master started up the street. Several doors below the Dille house Calvin pulled on Beowulf's leash, bringing him to a halt. Someone was leaving the party—and as the door opened widely he could see it was Hollingsworth. Calvin pulled the dog over into the shadows of a tree and waited. He had no intention of greeting him.

Clarence and Rita stood in the doorway as Hollingsworth went down the walk. At the street he turned and called out something that made Clarence and Rita laugh. They waved

again, then closed the door. Hollingsworth started toward his car but turned and walked across the street. He had seen the small cat. Picking it up and settling it snugly against his coat he walked back to the car and got in. Calvin felt an impulse to run toward the car and to say how moved he was by Hollingsworth's spontaneous kindness to the cat, but something, shyness or his habit of avoiding the man, restrained him.

Hollingsworth had started the motor. The car moved forward slowly for several houses, and stopped in front of a dark, unlighted house. Hollingsworth got out and stood on the sidewalk, peering until satisfied there was no sign of life. Moving quickly he carried the cat up the walk, opened the porch door, and tossed the cat in. Half-running he got back to the car and drove off quickly.

Beowulf had begun to pull on the leash, and Calvin bent over and stroked his head. "Old boy," he said, "what do you make of that!" The dog wagged his tail, and moved his legs, eager to go. "Okay, fellow," Calvin said, "We'll go. Just wait till Emily hears this!"

Calvin already knew what Emily would say. She would say: "Well, dear, you know you can't have it all pure."

It was one of her favorite remarks.

The Saint and the Scholar

Emeritus Professor Homer Greg was eighty-five, and so far as he or his doctor could tell he might live to be one hundred and five. He was the despair of the business manager of the university who month after month for twenty years had mailed him a retirement check. The business manager himself was sixty-four, and, although he never allowed himself to say so, his having to make out checks for Professor Greg was a piece of unfinished business that he would like to see settled before he himself retired. The gray-haired woman who stamped the cards at the circulation desk in the library held similar sentiments. Three times a week Professor Greg came in with his green cloth book bag, the kind that had been carried by school-

boys in Boston, and took it away, bulging with books. Professor Greg, she knew, was a world-famous scholar, but she couldn't understand why he was not content to rest on his laurels. He had several honorary degrees and if he lived he would probably get even more. What did he want? He couldn't really hope to learn much more, and certainly there were enough young scholars coming along who should be allowed to carry on. When she put his books on the desk for him she used her professional smile in return for his polite bow. She liked the touch of the cosmopolite in his manner, but she did wish he would retire, really retire.

Graduate students in his field knew him. Sitting in cafeterias that bordered the campus or standing in one of the bookstores, they saw him go by, carrying the bag tightly under his right arm. Sometimes he seemed to skid a little to the left, as old men sometimes do, but generally he moved steadily forward, seeming almost to glide. They knew he lived in a three story brick house and that his study was on the third floor. His light was on as late as midnight, and on winter mornings it was on again as early as five o'clock. They knew he was a widower, that he did his own cooking and his own housework. Occasionally one of the students rang his doorbell late in the afternoon and asked if Professor Greg was free to help him with a research problem on which he was working. Invariably he was invited in, given tea and macaroons, and from some invisible card file in his head Professor Greg listed all of the authorities who might prove useful. The titles could be in German, French, Italian or Spanish and might include magazines that were available only through the interlibrary loan service. The information was always helpful, but the real reason the students visited him was so they could say they had discussed their project with Professor Greg. It was as if they had said,

I learned this at the Bodleian, or in the British Museum, or at the Huntington.

Professor Greg was very thin, and his white skull seemed to be almost visible through the thin layer of skin, and in looking at him one might entertain the fancy that he was a lifelike statue. Once a student had said that during his visit with Professor Greg he had somehow felt like posterity itself being able to talk with the living past. He had also said that listening to Professor Greg was like being inland and lying in bed at night listening to the subdued roar of the ocean. This latter remark had reference to the reputation Professor Greg had had as a controversialist. Many years earlier a local reviewer, after interviewing him on the eve of the publication of one of his books, had called him a minotaur who, with his book finished, was wearing his plumed pen gracefully behind his ear. This was a journalistic excess, but it was true that Professor Greg had been a formidable antagonist. He was a gentleman, but where a fact or a logical inference was concerned he insisted on the exact truth.

Professor Greg's former department still drew students on the strength of his reputation. In the graduate study room there was an oil painting of Professor Greg. The face was stern and one could not study it without seeing in the eyes and in the set of the face a great devotion to duty. Beneath the portrait was a shelf of Professor Greg's books.

There was a departmental squabble behind the painting and hanging of the portrait and setting up the shelf of books. Both the portrait and the books had been there about ten years. The then, and still, chairman, Allen Briggs, was what is sometimes called an administrator rather than a scholar. Briggs was a dapper man, with a neat dark mustache. One would not have been surprised to learn he was a vice-president of a stocks and bonds

company. For the public or in addressing incoming graduate students he stressed scholarly achievement, but in the infighting, some of it done in deadly silence, he was for what he called compromise, by which he meant giving promotions and substantial raises to the undeserving, so that everyone could attend each other's cocktail parties in the most amicable mood. He was a friendly man, and he wanted everyone to be happy and satisfied. Visiting on another campus or at a national meeting, he smilingly acknowledged the eminence of Professor Greg, but when, ten years earlier, two young assistant professors, admirers of Professor Greg, had suggested a subscription for the portrait and the shelf, he had privately deplored their lack of worldly-mindedness.

The two men, John Hall and Charles Ford, were new appointees with brand new Ph.D.'s and with serious plans for their own scholarly achievements. Both men were tall and thin, and both were blond. If a colleague in another department did not know them very well, he might even have mistaken one for the other. During a department meeting, Hall had got up and made a brief but rather passionate speech about Professor Greg, saying he was world-renowned, how proud he was to be teaching a course that Greg had once taught, and how indebted to him everyone in their profession was. He had moved that the members of the department subscribe the necessary funds for a portrait and the shelf. Then he had put his hand through his thin hair and had sat down. Ford got up next, made a similar but even briefer speech, seconded the motion, smiled at Hall, and sat down. It was evident they had planned the motion and seconding. A murmur had gone through the twenty-five members of the department, a part of it tense and whispered. Briggs, an old hand at such meetings, sensed a difficult situation. There were full professors present who would not have been full

professors if Greg had remained on the staff and Briggs knew the depth of their dislike and resentment, and they in turn, by innuendo and gesture, had communicated their sentiments to certain younger members of the department. Briggs knew it would not do to allow a discussion, or, above all, a vote. Smiling blandly, he asked Hall and Ford if they would allow him to appoint a committee to study their proposal. On public occasions Briggs used administrative jargon, and his actual words were "a committee to adjudicate and possibly to implement your proposal." They readily agreed, and Briggs asked for and got a motion for adjournment.

Then there was a meeting of the seven full professors. Again, Briggs was on top of the situation. First, he listened patiently to several reasons why the proposal did not make sense. Slattery, who had written two unsuccessful textbooks and had made no contributions in his own field, said that if a portrait of Greg was hung, then portraits of other retired members should also be hung. Brockberg, a stout and voluble man who lectured to large sophomore groups because he generalized easily and had a dramatic manner, said he had heard of a dissertation done at the University of Chicago which seriously questioned the thesis behind one of Greg's best known books. Brockberg had pretentions to scholarship but had published almost nothing. Unfortunately for their relationship, Greg had read a manuscript that Brockberg had once submitted to the University Press. He had recommended against publication. Greg had chosen to tell Brockberg that he was the reader and to explain why he had advised against publication. He believed in being open in such matters. Brockberg had never forgiven him.

And Coombs, a dour and melancholy man who got his final promotion on the strength of a book he never managed to finish, said bluntly that it was just a sentimental gesture

on the part of two overly earnest young men. After a silence, Dickinson, who had once been a student of Greg, spoke. He said quite wistfully that he wished he had been able to emulate Greg. Then with some acidity he added that there could be no question of denying Greg the honor. No one else asked to speak. Professor Briggs, after surveying the group, sighed, then breathed in deeply. "Gentlemen," he said, "I agree with Dickinson. Nor would it do if either the administration or the students learned that Professor Greg's former colleagues declined to pay him this homage. I trust that when the matter comes to a vote you will support it."

When the motion was reintroduced, it passed unanimously. Briggs congratulated Messrs. Hall and Ford on their imagination, and he outlined the high points in Greg's career. He said Professor Greg would be pleased to know the department wished to do this for him. When the portrait was finished, Briggs added, he hoped Professor Greg would himself address the staff. Perhaps they could invite a few notables from neighboring institutions to be present for the occasion. When he finished, there was considerable applause. Walking back to his office, Briggs felt mildly elated. Perhaps Hall and Ford had had a good idea after all. Certainly it did the department no harm for the administration and even the public to know they wished to honor one to whom honor was due.

Within several months the portrait was almost finished. The visiting artist in the art history department had been pleased to do it for a nominal fee, both because he respected Greg and he found him a good subject for a portrait. Unfortunately, Mrs. Greg, ill for only two days, suddenly died. She had been a thin, handsome lady, and everyone in the department who had known her, as well as her many friends on campus, was genuinely sorry. But the end of the academic year was getting close and within a week after her burial the artist had asked and been

granted Greg's permission to continue with the portrait. Within a few days the portrait was finished.

The ceremony was everything that Professor Briggs could have asked. The chancellor, all of the deans, all the members of the department, many from related departments, and eight visiting notables were present, and all of them wearing their caps and brightly lined doctoral hoods. Three photographers were there flashing pictures. There were several speeches. When the portrait was unveiled a delighted ripple arose from the group, and then there was prolonged clapping. Professor Greg showed the signs of his recent grief. There was still a kind of fire in his dark eyes but his voice was softer than it had once been, and there was less intensity in his manner. He thanked all of them for this fine gesture toward him, and he explained in some detail why and how the academic life had been full of satisfaction for him. He spoke briefly about his wife. He said she had asked him to engage in no further controversies in print, and out of deference to her wishes he would not do so, even though, and he smiled, even though the frustration of not doing so might turn him into an embittered old man. On this note he ended. Tea and punch were served, Professor Greg was congratulated from all sides, and each of his former colleagues left feeling he had seen the end of an era.

Professor Greg did not entirely disappear from the consciousness of Slattery, Brockberg, Coombs or Briggs, but they felt somehow more at ease about him. During one of his lectures Brockberg found himself telling his sophomores that as cultivated citizens they should know the eminent men their university had produced and, his tongue faster than his powers of restraint, he included Greg. The following semester he was more careful, seeing to it that his list included no professional scholars.

As the next few years went by, Professors Hall and Ford could be said to have become more knowledgeable. The

first gleam of knowledgeableness came to Hall. There was a full professorship to be filled, and the names of candidates had been asked for by Briggs. Hall had listed five men nationally known and submitted the list to the selection committee, which oddly enough was composed of Slattery, Brockberg, Coombs, Briggs, and a junior dean from the counseling bureau. Meeting with the committee, Hall outlined what he saw as original and valid in the contribution each had made, and, as he subsequently realized, it was the special achievement of each, when restated and reinterpreted, that made *his* candidacy unacceptable. In the end, a pleasant and mediocre man, who had not as yet published his findings, was appointed. Hall and Ford discussed this experience, over coffee and in their offices. During the next summer vacation, Ford sent Hall a long letter saying he had been reading Shaw's *Saint Joan.* In the epilogue Shaw had made it clear that the world was pleased enough to have the young lady in legend and in history, but it had no desire to have her or her kind among the living. Ford had ended the letter by saying he guessed the saint and the true scholar shared the same fate.

That fall the two of them began seeing more of Professor Greg. Earlier they had been too much in awe of him, but now somehow they were both more tolerant of their own limitations and less fearful that Greg would be critical of them. He welcomed them and, as the winter wore on, they often sat together in front of the fireplace in the high-ceilinged parlor. Before it was time for them to leave Greg served them brandy in huge brandy snifters. He was showing his age more and sometimes he seemed to be looking backward down the years to scenes his younger friends could not quite envision. Sometimes he told them about meetings he had attended in Lausanne or Perugia or something he had discovered, quite by accident, in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

They rarely told him about department politics, but one evening, after a second brandy, Ford found himself saying that at a cocktail party Brockberg had said to him that his friend Greg was, well, without sufficient humor. Ford had thought he could state it less explicitly than that but halfway through his sentence he realized that Greg already knew what he was going to say. Greg's eyes lit up with a look of disinterested amusement. Walking down the snowy sidewalk together afterwards, Ford apologized to Hall for his gaucherie, and Hall told him not to worry about it because Greg understood Brockberg better than either of them could hope to do.

The winter, the spring, the summer, and the fall went by; then still other winters and springs and summers. Ford and Hall both began to be aware of the way the years clicked off. New students came and there were end-of-semester exams. Each of them had married, each had two children, and occasionally on a Sunday afternoon one or the other, family in tow, would walk up to the old three story brick house and pay Professor Greg a visit. Greg liked children and their climbing over the old velours sofa or even pushing over a stack of books seemed not to bother him. And he liked to talk with the young wives, who told him about faculty teas, about what the chancellor's wife was quoted as having said to someone, or about the attitude of their neighbors toward the university families. Ford or Hall, or both of them together, continued to stop in for an evening of conversation with Greg. They told him about the articles they were writing, and with his help tried to define the major lines in the book each was working on during the summers. Greg rarely said anything about what he was working on, or even if he was working toward any specific goal; but Hall and Ford often ran into him in the library, saw him picking up his books and putting them into his green book bag, and

students ringing his doorbell frequently had to wait until he came down the three long flights from his study.

Then one morning he was dead. He had come down his porch stairs, green bag in hand, and fallen slowly onto the sidewalk. When a passing student reached him he was already dead. It was an ironic season for him to die. Autumn had come and registration for classes had just begun. There was a large funeral procession, which included the business manager of the university and the gray-haired librarian who worked at the circulation desk, as well as the entire department. Briggs, Ford and Hall were among the pallbearers. Even after classes had been going some weeks, Ford and Hall found themselves still depressed. Over coffee they talked about Greg and what he had meant to them. The truth was that his passing had left them feeling isolated and, as Hall said, somehow suddenly middle-aged. Each allowed himself a few jibes at those of Greg's colleagues who had not properly appreciated him.

During the third week in October, Briggs left messages in both of their letter boxes, requesting that they come to see him at eleven o'clock. They entered his office together and he motioned for them to sit down. There was a letter on his desk, and he read it through at least twice before speaking to them. Finally he explained that he had received a letter from Greg's lawyer, the executor of his estate. During the past ten years Greg had worked steadily at what might prove to be the outstanding work of his career. It was substantially finished but would require some editing, and, of course, it would have to be seen through the various stages of publication. The next point was a little more complicated and he began this more slowly. As they might have expected, Greg had suggested the two of them do the actual work, but he had also suggested one of the senior professors to act as a kind

of supervising chairman. However, it was his own considered opinion that—at which point Hall, unable to restrain himself, asked, "You mean Brockberg?" "As a matter of fact," Briggs responded, "Greg did suggest Brockberg, but, as I started to say, it seems much to be preferred that all seven of the full professors constitute themselves a committee to oversee the publication. They won't interfere with either of you, to be sure. No one could object to this arrangement because, after all, it was Greg's valedictory to his profession and to his old department."

Briggs paused, then added, "I'm sure you'll agree that there is no reason for Professor Brockberg to learn that Greg had suggested him. After all . . ." and Briggs gestured with his right hand, as though to say the virtues in his plan were perfectly clear. He thanked them, said he had a meeting to attend right now, but perhaps later in the day they could get together about the matter.

Silently the two of them went down the corridor together and into Ford's office. Hall spoke first. "Imagine Greg singling out old Brockberg! I guess he wanted to assure us that he wasn't above playing a little joke."

"Yes, and too bad Brockberg will have to go without knowing that there was such a joke. But what about this honorary committee stuff? Won't they all feel that Briggs has arranged a shotgun marriage?"

"Maybe at first," Hall answered. "That was my first reaction, but my guess is that it came to Briggs in stages. When he first read the letter from Greg's lawyer he must have said something like 'Jesus, Lord!', but on thinking it over he could see there were real advantages. And he can make the others see the light."

"Of course," Ford said. "It has all been properly adjudicated—and now for the implementation."

Both men laughed quietly.

Love and Need

One cold and snowy day in February, Professor Albert Wells was having lunch in John's Chinese Campus Cafe. This was Tuesday, the afternoon he had his seminar, and he had made it a habit to have a larger than usual lunch, usually a thin soup, egg foo yung and tea. John's Chinese Campus Cafe had dark-stained booths, painted lanterns, and Chinese characters painted on rice paddy panels decorating the walls. Once Professor Wells had asked John, a paunchy American-born Chinese, about the pseudo-Chinese décor. "For you heathens who like to come in here, Mister Wells," he had answered. "For you more speculative heathens," he had added, bowing.

Across from Professor Wells sat a young Englishman,

fresh from Oxford. His name was Howard Foster, and he was an instructor in philosophy. He had the English manner of arguing, insisting that what his opponent said couldn't be more wrong. His light hair was combed back on his head, and as he argued a strand of its usually fell over his right eye. He liked to argue, and so did Professor Wells. Whenever Wells found someone disagreeing with him, his eyes brightened.

Foster said that he had met a Rodney Kitner, a publisher's representative, that morning and had thought him many cuts above the general run of publishers' representatives. Wells agreed, saying he and Rodney were old friends. He added that he was especially eager to see him this trip in order to learn about the latest development in an academic family in Pocatello, Idaho.

Professor Wells sometimes said, and he repeated it now for Howard Foster, that bookmen were like the nineteenth century drummers, who, in selling their wares, carried news and gossip from town to town and from one business establishment to another. Some of them, of course, knew only the titles in their catalogues, but others understood the shifts and developments going on in the various academic fields. Wells added that he especially enjoyed seeing Rodney Kitner because Rodney had not only a well-stocked mind, he had an eye for things spare and strange. He looked forward to the regular October and February visits, to the days when Rodney Kitner opened the door and came in, saying, "How are things this semester?"

Rodney was responsible for some of the best books on his company's list, but he had refused an editor's desk in the New York office. Professor Wells suspected the reason for this was that Rodney enjoyed visiting the big and little campuses that stretched from Chicago to the West Coast. What really kept Rodney at it, year after

year, Professor Wells guessed, was that visiting on a campus, for a few days or a week at fairly regular intervals, was like reading chapters in a loosely constructed, or episodic, novel. He knew that listening to and arguing with Rodney gave him an opportunity to learn more about the sort of people one lived with every day, but "distanced," as aestheticians said, caught in a significant pattern of stylized details.

Wells tapped a cigarette on his left wrist and in the process of lighting it directed a question at Foster. "If your wife suddenly got the delusion that her two dead children were alive, but she seemed otherwise almost normal, would you feel obliged to help make her recognize the true facts?"

"Why, yes, of course," Foster said without hesitation. "There might be horrendous consequences if one allowed her to believe they were alive."

"That's probably what I'd have said if I didn't know the circumstances of this woman and her husband." He pushed his package of cigarettes toward Foster, who took one.

"Why do you say that?" Foster asked.

"Professor and Mrs. Walter Boersch," Wells said, "They were both displaced persons, with many frightful things in their past. They had two kids. Even though Boersch earned an advanced degree, at Columbia, I think, and got himself a secure and quiet job in Idaho, his wife remained uneasy and fearful. People there were kind to them, but even so she always felt that something awful could happen to them."

"And something did. To their children?"

"Yes. They had a boy Heinrich and a girl Emma. A fellow in the same department with Boersch, a Henry Jones, was taking his wife for a vacation near Long Beach in California. These people, the Joneses, had no children of their own and as a kind gesture they offered to take the Boersch

children with them. The Boersches were pleased, of course, that the children could have a week or two at the seashore."

"What happened to the children?"

"Jones took them out in a sailboat. A strong wind caught and capsized the boat. All three were drowned, and none of the bodies were recovered." Wells took a sip of tea. Then he said, "Mrs. Jones couldn't bring herself to return to Pocatello."

"She couldn't face the mother?"

"Largely that, I suppose."

"What about the mother? She couldn't believe the children were gone? That was the delusion?"

"Yes, but not exactly that way. At first she took it very stoically. Or so it seemed. After all, she had seen a lot of suffering. Children separated from parents. All that."

"But she hadn't lost children before. Not her own children."

"That's right. She had not lost her own children. One morning about three months after the drowning, Mrs. Boersch asked her husband why they hadn't heard from the Joneses in the past few days. She said surely the Joneses must realize that parents wanted to know if the children were having a good time and if everything was going well. One can imagine the sort of thing she would say. Boersch didn't know how to reply.

"That afternoon finding the letter box empty again, she sat down and wrote to the children, in care of Mrs. Jones. She even drew pictures for them. Those matchlike figures children are fond of." Professor Wells took out a pencil and drew similar figures on his paper napkin and turned it toward Foster.

"What," Foster asked, "did Mrs. Jones do, when she received the letter?"

"She phoned Boersch at his office. She wanted to know what she should do. Boersch told her he hoped she would

write saying the children were having a good time even though they missed their mother. Maybe that was a mistake, but he was distraught, and he was afraid that an honest reply might cause Mrs. Boersch to break down completely."

"That was a big mistake," Foster said. "The mother should have been forced to confront the truth." Foster hit the table lightly with his fist, emphasizing how wrong Boersch had been.

"Maybe so. Anyway, Mrs. Boersch got the reply she wanted. Then there were other letters of the same sort. Pretty soon even Mrs. Boersch's neighbors were talking to her about the children. The whole community took it up, sort of like the townspeople who pretended the naked emperor was dressed in gorgeous silk garments. I know this seems weird. But everyone of their acquaintances, even the grocer, the milkman, and the mailman, all talked to her about the children."

"I'll say it's weird. God keep me from Pocatello, Idaho! Did all this happen last summer?"

"No, the summer before last. Weeks, then months, went by. She continued the correspondence, and she talked about the vacation the children were having."

"Doesn't that suggest she hadn't completely accepted her delusion? If all that time went by she must have asked herself why the children didn't come home."

"Yes, that was odd, but then she did become impatient about their being away so long. She wanted the children home."

"This meant the delusion really had a hold on her?"

"Well, that's one of the oddest parts of the whole business. During all of this she continued her ordinary life—running a household, going to the library, joining other faculty wives at their coffee circles. All that sort of thing. Kitner says she's a small pretty woman with intense black

eyes. He's been at their home for dinner several times. He says Mrs. Boersch is a very agreeable, nice person. Nothing about her suggests that she's out of her mind. Nothing, that is, except the delusion!"

Wells paused as he mashed out his cigarette. "There are," he continued, "people with a single delusion. There's an old man in our neighborhood, just up the block from us, who talks sensibly about everything except medicine. On that subject he's what the undergraduates would call 'real gone.' Every time there's a Nobel award in medicine he's sure the award should have been his. I think I understand the *why* of his delusion. The old man didn't have a chance to go to school, despite his having a genuine gift for theorizing. If he had been a professor of medicine or a researcher in medicine he'd probably have been very good. He's not a vain or an assertive man, but somewhere in his cracked old noggin is the feeling that he has been cheated, that he never had a chance to do what he needed to do. He never had a chance to bask in the satisfaction and the prestige that would have gone with the job. He has only the one delusion. And with Mrs. Boersch, too, it's the one delusion."

"What did Boersch do about her wanting the kids back?"

"He decided to adopt children."

"Oh, no! That wouldn't work."

"You may be right. When Kitner was here, he was wondering about what would happen. He was pretty sure Boersch would be able to adopt the children. Rodney wasn't making any predictions about how it would work out, but perhaps we'll learn this afternoon. That's one of the reasons I'm eager to see Rodney."

Professor Wells and his young friend got up. They paid their bills at the counter and went out. Snow had been falling lightly and the air was thin and cold, discouraging

talk. The two walked slowly toward the campus. At the liberal arts building they separated, Wells going up the stairs of the building and Foster going on toward the library. As they separated Foster said, "That's a weird case out there."

"Yes, and a very sad one, too," Wells answered. Each lifted his right hand, gesturing good-by.

It was four o'clock before Wells saw Kitner. Back in his office after his seminar, he had sat back deeply in his swivel chair and lit a cigarette. It was getting dark and he had snapped on his desk light.

Kitner knocked lightly and came in. His coat was steaming. "This weather you people have here," he said, and Wells, getting up, answered, "You'll be back in California soon, so don't feel too sorry for yourself. Have a seat, Rodney."

Kitner unbuttoned his coat, tossed his hat on a chair, and sat down. He was a tall but heavily built man, and somehow suggested good living. Wells settled into his chair again. Each asked how the other had been. Then Wells said, "Rodney, how has that family in Pocatello been doing? Did they adopt the children?"

"Oh, you've been wondering about the Boersches. Yes, they did." And Rodney smiled as Wells had known he would. "Two handsome little kids from Holland. Surprisingly like the other children."

"You don't mean Boersch arranged to get children who looked like their own . . ."

"No, I think that was accidental."

"And Mrs. Boersch—when was she told he was trying to adopt children?"

"I don't believe he told her about it until shortly before the kids were to arrive. Some one on the campus there

told me that Boersch didn't tell her until they were driving to the airport at Boise. He had arranged with the Royal Dutch Airlines in New York to have the children flown there."

"How did she act when she saw them?"

"Not very responsive. And of course the kids must have felt strange. Being put down on an airport after coming from Europe and meeting a new set of parents. It must have been hard on them. That drive back to Pocatello couldn't have been precisely a joyous occasion. Lots of things must have been running through Mrs. Boersch's head."

"But she accepted the kids? Was kind to them, and all that?"

"Oh, yes. She didn't balk at their using the things her own children had used—their beds, their games, and probably even their clothes. The day after their arrival she put them into school, the boy in nursery school, the girl in first grade. Before long, the kids were chattering away in English." Kitner studied Wells and then said, "What do you suppose was the first thing the boy said in English?"

"I can't imagine," Wells said.

"He said, 'Hello, Mama.' It happened at lunch time, just before Boersch came in. He had to call a doctor to give her a sedative. But later she insisted on getting up to fix dinner for the kids."

"What about her delusion? Didn't she say anything further about getting her own children back?"

"Not about getting them back. But believe me, she had the delusion, or *a* delusion. It was just of a different character."

"What do you mean by that?"

"First let me tell you what happened. That same evening, the little girl asked whether the things in the bedroom were hers or belonged to the *other* girl who had lived there.

They were all sitting in the living room, of course. Boresch didn't know what this question would do to his wife. He watched her get up and get the family photograph album from a drawer. The two kids sat down next to her on the sofa, and she showed them pictures of the other children. Most of the snaps had been taken right in their yard or some place in Pocatello. The kids recognized a lot of things, and inevitably the little girl wanted to know where the other children were now."

"That must have been a tough moment for Boersch. Did he interfere?"

"No, he didn't. He left it up to her."

"Well, what did she say?"

"She told them the other children were out in California. They were with friends, the Joneses. She said the Joneses had not had any children of their own, so they were very happy to have Heinrich and Emma. The children were happy too. There was the ocean, and the climate was lovely. Someday maybe they'd all go out there for a visit. Then she scooted the kids off to bed." Rodney smiled.

"I gather you feel the delusion was losing its hold on her," Wells said.

"I hope so. The delusion, as I see it, grew out of the needs of a very affectionate woman, with strong maternal feelings. We like to tell ourselves our children need us, but it is equally true that parents need their children. Isn't that so? There's undoubtedly something to this notion that we search for a sort of immortality in sending out a new generation of our blood and flesh, but I think the day by day looking after kids, seeing that they get along all right, provides a much deeper satisfaction. It involves us in the flow of generations, it allows us to do our part in keeping things in order, to keep the waters of the world in their proper channels." Kitner paused, then slapped his knee.

"But, look," he added, "what about you and Doris driving to my hotel and joining me for dinner?"

Professor Wells sat up straight in his chair. "No, no, Rodney. You come and have dinner with us. After dinner we'll build a fire in the fireplace and talk. Doris will dig something out of the freezer. We've been expecting you for a week."

"That would be very nice," Kitner agreed.

"Good, I'll give her a ring and tell her to whip up a shaker of Manhattans for us." And he reached for the telephone.

When Professor Wells and Kitner came out of the door of the liberal arts building, the sky was quite dark and the first stars were trying to flicker into permanence for the night. It was still very cold. At the corner they waited for the red light to change to green. As they stepped from the curb, Howard Foster, the young Englishman, came up behind them. All of them were headed toward the parking lot a block away. Kitner and Foster greeted each other.

"Don't keep me in suspense," Foster said. "What happened out there in Idaho?"

"For one thing," Wells said, "you probably are wrong in predicting the adoption would be bad for Mrs. Boersch. Thus far it is working out very well."

"You mean she's recovered?"

"Well, not completely. Next time Rodney comes through here he should have the end of the story for us."

"Maybe so," Kitner said, "maybe so."

"And the next time we have lunch together," Foster said to Wells, "you'll have to tell me what Kitner has told you."

"Yes," Wells said. "We'll make it soon." And he looked up at the darkened sky, from which snow might descend again at any time, as though the sky somehow related them to the Boersch family out there in Pocatello, Idaho.

Inscrutability on the Sceptered Isle

Miss Delphine Price reminded one of the scent from a small sachet of lavender in a half-opened bureau drawer. Her brown hair was drawn back neatly in a bun, and her skin suggested health, cleanliness and indeterminate age. Invariably she wore a white blouse with a small black cameo at the throat. And her gold-rimmed glasses made her pale blue eyes seem intensely blue.

Miss Price had taken an M.A. a long while back and had taught freshman English, with an emphasis on grammar, for more years than almost anyone could remember. She was gentle by temperament, but she knew the rules and would not allow anyone in a class of hers to entertain the heresy that usage and correctness bore any necessary re-

lationship to each other. "And, never, never," she would say, "begin a sentence with 'In my opinion . . .'"

Year after year Miss Price had said "Good morning" in so cheerful a voice that even those whose bodies naturally assumed a recumbent position sat up, half sat up or at least moved slightly forward in response. Miss Price inspired respect.

Those of her colleagues who expected serious scholarship and originality from members of the profession were sometimes critical of her, but gently so. Ideas of the more speculative sort did not hold any interest for her. Nor had the years at the university changed her in any readily perceivable way. Miss Price belonged in the long line of women who have taught school, or simply done their duty, whatever it might be, cheerfully and without question.

In addition to teaching, Miss Price had taken care of her mother. After the mother's death Miss Price's friends had said the thing for her to do was to go to Europe. They all felt that caring for the mother, who had been senile and could not always remember her daughter's name, had been a great burden, although Miss Price had never said so. About ten years earlier her mother had tried to start a fire in a wastebasket but Miss Price had merely said, "Mother, we can't have fires in the house!" The old lady had smiled fatuously and never tried it again. After she had died and was lying with death's still aura of peace and mystery about her, Miss Price had cried. She had always lived with her mother and she would miss her. But no one should give in to grief, and she had not allowed her mother's passing to interfere with her returning to school the following week. She had, however, listened when one or another of her friends said she should take a trip. Yes, she had thought, she had always wanted to go to Europe. Now she would go.

And she had. Making arrangements had been easier than

she had anticipated. The little travel bureau near the university had taken care of everything. In Europe she had seen a good deal of two former students, Laurel and Jim McGregor, who were spending their honeymoon there. They had taken her to places she would not have undertaken to see for herself, particularly in Rome. Through them she had met interesting people, especially the Danachevskys. The McGregors had wanted her to go to North Africa with them, but she had gone back to England. She felt safer in England.

After coming home to her little apartment near the university, Miss Price had spent many evenings reading her travel journal, and occasionally adding something she had forgotten. The fall semester would begin soon. There was already a chill in the air, especially in the mornings. A number of her friends came to visit and to talk about her trip. She served them sherry. She kept a bottle in her small cabinet on which there were framed snapshots of two children, one white and one black. Before the trip she had disapproved of drinking. Not that she had been openly critical of her friends who drank, but drinking, even wine, blurred one's mind, and she could see no advantage in wilfully disturbing the clarity of one's mind.

Miss Price's journal entries were models of neatness and precision, with at least one entry for each day, beginning with a description of her cabin and the spirit of excitement and pleasant confusion that precedes the hour of sailing. She had enjoyed sitting in the sunshine of the upper deck watching young couples play shuffleboard and badminton, and walking along the deck into the wind. At her table there had been a number of interesting people. Mr. Patterson was going to Germany as a Fulbright scholar. The Stevensons, husband, wife, and three children, were going to a missionary college in Beirut, where he would teach mathematics. And there was Miss Grace, en route to Ger-

many to marry a young man she had met there the preceding summer. Miss Price had written several paragraphs about the hopes and the good will of these young people.

The vessel had stopped briefly at Cobh, to send in a bargeload of passengers who were visiting Ireland. The sea was a lovely blue and the land in the distance was more intensely green than she could have imagined. And there was a ruined castle, with great vines clinging to the walls, on a high hill. It reminded her of eighteenth century prints.

She had taken the boat train to London and a taxi straight to her hotel, Queen Anne's Gate, in Kensington. The young woman at the wicket was pleasant, said she hoped Miss Price would enjoy her visit, and rang for a porter to take her up in the elevator to her room. Miss Price stayed at the Queen Anne's Gate while "doing" London. She went to the National Portrait Gallery, to the Tate, to the British Museum and to three plays, one of them directed by John Gielgud. One morning early she took a train down to Tunbridge Wells and from there a bus to Sir Philip Sidney's country seat, Penshurst. Unfortunately she had picked the one day in the week when it was closed, but she saw it from the distance, with its huge towers and great stone walls. When she returned home she would take down her *Oxford Book of English Verse* and copy stanzas by Ben Jonson and Edmund Waller about Penshurst into her journal.

Miss Price had run into the McGregors in Stratford. She had been sitting on a bench looking at the swans in the little river and trying unsuccessfully to call up an image of Will Shakespeare. It had been startling suddenly to hear her own name. Laurel hugged her and Jim had squeezed her hand. Miss Price had readily agreed to join them on a quick trip to Rome. She was delighted to have someone to talk with. The next morning they flew to Rome.

Looking down at the city from the air was like looking down at a great relief map. There were the seven hills, and there was the Coliseum, and the dome of St. Peter's, and Hadrian's tomb, the Pantheon and the viaducts. She had been surprised that the Coliseum was brown, not white marble, the way it always was in the colored illustrations in textbooks. But the trees were scrubby and, as Laurel said, moth-eaten, the way they are in paintings.

Rome was lovely, with its churches, and the soft changing colors of the buildings in the late afternoon. There had been many things to put in her journal. She described in detail the room where Keats died, and she had learned that the cemetery was not, as literary histories called it, the Protestant Cemetery; it was the non-Catholic cemetery.

Miss Price had not liked some of the things one saw in Rome, and especially she had disliked the way men ogled women. On a crowded streetcar, riding toward the United States Embassy, she had seen a stout man reach out and pat a woman passenger's buttocks. The woman, dressed in black silk, had moved slowly away but otherwise made no protest. The man had smiled at Miss Price, showing large white teeth. She had closed her eyes and had got out at the next stop and walked. Miss Price could remember vaguely the ancient evils of Rome as described in Hawthorne's *The Marble Faun.* She could well believe the city had not changed for the better. When Laurel and Jim had suggested a bus trip out to the catacombs on the Appian Way she had said no. She would rest. That evening they had proposed going on to North Africa, and again she had said no. She had read two of the short stories about Algeria written by Albert Camus, and she did not feel up to "doing" North Africa. Rome was disturbing enough. Laurel and Jim should go on and make the trip. She would fly back to England and they could meet there in a few days. Jim had told her about a couple, the Danachevskys, they had

met in London, and gave her their address. If she became lonely, she should call them.

The next morning, late, Miss Price was back in England. It was raining, but even so she felt better. There was something sturdy and practical and orderly about England. One felt it. She did not plan to go to Paris.

That afternoon she had sat in her room listening to the Third Programme on the B.B.C. After tea—she liked the term "high tea"—in the lounge she had gone out to see the street, De Vere Gardens, where Robert Browning and Henry James had been neighbors, and then she had walked in Kensington Park as far as the Serpentine, where Harriet Shelley had drowned herself. Miss Price was tired, and as she walked back to the hotel she had found herself trying to blot out an image of Harriet, looking somehow like Ophelia, going down into the dark water.

The next afternoon there had been a telephone message, asking that she phone Mrs. Danachevsky. Mr. Danachevsky answered her call. He said that Jim had written saying Miss Price was staying nearby, at the Queen's Gate, and he and his wife would very much like to have her over the next evening. He would pick her up in his car. That would be very nice, she said, and she would look forward to seeing them. Miss Price opened the London phone directory to see where the Danachevskys lived. They were on De Vere Gardens, in the very block where Browning and Henry James had lived. She made a mental note to inquire about this fact.

Mr. Danachevsky was a pleasant man, round-faced and cheerful. He told Miss Price he was an assistant movie director. Mrs. Danachevsky, who had opened the door to receive them, was a tall woman, with a reserved but friendly manner. Two children, both very young, and dressed for bed, were playing on the floor. One, a boy, was quite black but with Caucasian features, the other, a girl,

was blond. Miss Price's eyes widened, and Mrs. Danachevsky smiled. "Let me take your things," she said, and Miss Price slipped out of her coat.

"C'mon, kids," Mr. Danachevsky said, "say hello to Miss Price, then off to bed with you." The children got up from the floor, standing close together. The boy was grave, and strikingly beautiful. The little girl was roly-poly, and she pursed her lips in looking up at Miss Price.

"Good night, children," Miss Price said, "and have pleasant dreams." Holding each other by the hand, they followed Mr. Danachevsky out of the room.

As Miss Price and Mrs. Danachevsky sat down, a young woman came in carrying a tray with a bottle of sherry and glasses. Miss Price was aware of the full breasts under the girl's creamy white blouse and of her loosely waved blond hair.

"Thank you, Marie," Mrs. Danachevsky said. "Just put it here in front of us. Marie, this is Miss Price." "How do you do, ma'am," Marie said, and Miss Price bowed and smiled in return.

"Marie, is Mike coming to take you to the cinema?" "Yes'um," the girl said, "in just a few minutes."

"Fine, have a good time."

"Thank you, ma'am."

Miss Price knew the girl was not English, but she was not able to identify her nationality. She suspected the girl had been crying—her eyes were dark underneath.

The doorbell rang as Mr. Danachevsky returned and he opened the door. "Oh, hello, Mike," he said, "nice to see you." A tall Negro, with pleasant features, stepped in, taking Mr. Danachevsky's outstretched hand. He and Mrs. Danachevsky exchanged greetings, and he bowed upon being introduced to Miss Price. Marie came in, dressed in a black suit that emphasized the firm yet ample curves of her body. In a moment they were both gone.

"They've had a hard week," Mr. Danachevsky said, sitting down. He reached over for the bottle, opened it, and filled the three glasses. "Cheers," he said, as he raised his glass to his lips. His wife, smiling, raised her glass toward his. Miss Price put her glass to her lips, then put it back on the table. "My dear," Mrs. Danachevsky said, "they are the parents of the little boy."

"Oh!" Miss Price said, then added, "is he an American?"

"No, no," Mrs. Danachevsky replied, "he's Nigerian. He's been a student here for three years. This weekend he is flying home, for good probably, and taking the child with him."

"Then they are not married?" Miss Price asked.

"No, they are not," Mrs. Danachevsky said.

"They don't want to marry?"

"I suppose they do, but it doesn't seem advisable, not when one has thought it through, as they undoubtedly have."

Miss Price frowned. She asked if they couldn't live together in Nigeria.

"No, not easily," Mrs. Danachevsky said. "His people don't want her. She's white—and they have their own preferences about the degree of pigmentation in one's skin."

"They prefer their own kind of skin," Mr. Danachevsky said. "Marie couldn't stand their superiority. We didn't tell you that as a young child Marie was a Hitler youth maiden. It is an achievement that she could love Mike or Mike love her. I'm sure they do love each other. By the way, his name isn't Mike. People call him that because they can't pronounce his name." Mr. Danachevsky finished the wine in his glass and refilled it.

Miss Price put her hand to her forehead, rubbing the skin with her fingertips. She knew there must be a solution.

"Is he, is the man," she asked, "a responsible person?"

"I think so," Mr. Danachevsky answered. "He has never

tried to deny his paternity." Miss Price then asked, "If he is responsible, why doesn't he marry her and settle down here, right here in London?" Mr. Donachevsky smiled and said, "He's a professional man, a highly trained civil engineer. What sort of professional life could he have here? In Nigeria he can do a lot for the boy. Here he could do very little for him."

"Well," Miss Price said, her voice rising, "couldn't they go to her home in Germany?" Mr. Danachevsky snorted. "Ah, Marie with a colored baby and a colored husband in Germany! Impossible."

Miss Price lowered her eyes. "Excuse me, Miss Price," he said. "But, you see, I'm Jewish. I got out of Germany before the war. I know whereof I speak."

Miss Price studied him before saying, "You helped her then, when she was having the baby?"

"Yeah," he answered, "we helped. We had just had our little girl. As a matter of fact, the circumstances of Marie's coming home here were rather funny. We took her to a nursing home to have the child. We didn't know who the father was. Marie was mum about it, and we hadn't yet met Mike. She wrote from the nursing home that the child was rather brown, and she was afraid we wouldn't want her back. Rather brown! We knew this might be a decided understatement, but we felt responsible, or as responsible as anyone not related to her could feel, and we told her to bring the child home with her. Her little chap and our little girl have eaten together, slept together, been bathed together, and . . . Here, let me show you some pictures we've taken."

Mr. Danachevsky leaned forward, pulled open a small drawer and took out a handful of snapshots. All of them showed the two children—in their bath, in the garden, in the park, or holding hands on the porch steps. One snap of the boy caught his strange beauty, the dark silken hair,

the large delicate head, and the sad but huge and luminous eyes. Miss Price found tears forming in her eyes. She blinked, and reached over for the glass of sherry, and drank it quickly. Mr. Danachevsky refilled the glass.

That evening they talked of other things, about her university, about Rome, and about the film industry. Mr. Danachevsky told her about a picture he was to work on the following year in western Canada. It was about the first generation of farmers in Alberta. Perhaps they would all meet again in America. They could hope so, and he offered a toast to that possibility. Miss Price lifted her glass, and drank to it with them.

Miss Price did not stay in England as long as she had planned. She did go to Lamb House at Rye, looked at the books Henry James had in his library, and walked in the garden. She went through the great cathedral at Canterbury, and noted with some amazement the actual tomb of Henry IV. Shakespeare's *Henry IV* was a standard text in freshman English, and she knew it almost by heart. She took a taxi to the cemetery in Canterbury to visit Joseph Conrad's tomb, and read on the slab:

> Sleep after toyle, port after stormie seas,
> Ease after warre, death after life, does greatly please.

Oddly, the taxi driver as a young man had driven a carriage in Conrad's funeral cortege, and he recalled it for her in some detail. But Miss Price's heart was no longer in her travels. Dutifully she went to Oxford and to Cambridge, and looked into some of the rooms once occupied by famous English poets. But mostly she stayed in her rooms reading and listening to the B.B.C. She had arranged for return passage in mid-August, almost a month earlier than she had originally planned.

Laurel and Jim McGregor remonstrated with her. They were full of stories about Algeria and Morocco and Spain.

But Miss Price said she was tired and wanted to rest for a few weeks before school began. She did visit the Danachevskys with them. The little boy, they told her, had been taken to Nigeria by his father, and Marie had returned to Germany. Mr. Danachevsky added that, after all, Marie was young. She would marry and have a family in Germany.

Miss Price did not comment on that. But before leaving she asked if she might have a picture of each of the children. The Danachevskys were touched and allowed her to pick out the two she liked most. As they said good night they insisted that she write to them when she got home, and she said she'd be only too happy to write. It was a sad, but nonetheless a nice, evening for Miss Price.

At home, Miss Price bought a silver frame for the two snaps, and put it on a little mahogany cabinet near her reading chair. She thought about her trip a great deal. When visitors asked her about the children, she told them the story of Marie, the young Nigerian, and the Danachevskys. The boy's eyes held a fascination for her that she could not explain. When alone she sometimes poured herself a glass of sherry and sipped it as she studied his expression.

The Retirement of Professor John Underhill

Professor John Underhill drove slowly along the winding cemetery road because it was narrow and uphill and because, consciously or not, he always did what seemed the proper thing to do. The young man next to him, whom the superintendent of Lakeview Cemetery had assigned the job of satisfying Professor Underhill's needs and desires insofar as it was within their power to do so, sat quietly. Professor Underhill noted the lines of cypress trees on either side of the road. The young man had said some of the newer cemeteries not only had no cypress trees but prohibited both mausoleums and grave stones; there were no mounds either; all that marked the final resting place was a name on a small piece of metal. The young man had

implied that Lakeview Cemetery believed one deserved more than this; however old-fashioned mounds and stones might seem to some, they bespoke a sense of the individuality and personal dignity of the departed. Professor Underhill had no opinion in the matter, and he had not replied.

Professor Underhill stopped the car in front of the superintendent's building. In getting out, the young man said he knew that Professor Underhill would be satisfied. Each thanked the other, said good-by, the door was closed, and Professor Underhill drove the last hundred yards to the stone arched entrance and turned right into Lake Street, heading back to the campus. Ordinarily he would have avoided Lake Street. Traffic on it was heavy, and the innumerable used car lots depressed him, but today he did not think of these things. How many years had it been since he had visited the cemetery? He could not say with any certainty, but probably it was twenty or twenty-five years ago. The university was retiring him this spring. Only the month of May left and a few days in June, then he was finished. If anyone asked him how it felt to be sixty-seven, he would not be able to answer simply. Sometimes he seemed to be dreaming a dream that had just begun, and in the morning he would get up, a young man, with a young man's mixed feelings of anxieties and hope. At other times, he knew he had lived many long years, that his own history and all history were a part of eternity. The headstone on his wife's grave had startled him a little. *Margaret Leech Underhill, 1890–1913.* Standing there, he had not thought of her as his dead wife or even as a person, he had been struck by the fancy that one dead at twenty-three would be young forever. A good poet might make something of the notion, and he had shrugged a little, as he often did when he thought of something with which someone with a more orderly mind and more imagination might do something.

The green lights had been with him for the past twelve or fifteen blocks, but now he was stopped by a red light. He reached into his left side coat pocket for his cigarette case, removed a cigarette, tapped it, and put it between his lips. He reached toward the light on the dashboard, then reconsidered and reached into his right side coat pocket for the engraved silver lighter his colleagues in the department had given him at the luncheon in his honor. After lighting the cigarette, he thrust the lighter more forcefully than necessary back into his pocket. The light turned green, and the lines of traffic moved again. Professor Underhill's eyes sought the rearview mirror for a brief moment, as though he were asking why he was petulant, or even if it were true that he was petulant, but there was no answer there, and he began to watch the car in front of him.

In certain ways, the luncheon had been all he could have hoped for, and at least there had been no open embarrassment. Here he was, a man of sixty-seven, retiring as an assistant professor. Men half his age and younger had come into the department and had quickly moved up to associate and full professor. He had no quarrel with any of this. Years ago he had made occasional efforts to become, as administrators called it, a producing scholar; but every manuscript invariably had come back with a rejection slip or with a note explaining why the editor could not use it. For a few years he had been a little frenetic, twitching unexpectedly as he talked with people, and for awhile he had a nervous laugh, which upset him even more than it did his colleagues. Gradually he calmed down, and when the then chairman, long since dead, had asked if he would mind sharing an office with Hayford Smith he not only did not twitch or blink, he smiled, and it was the chairman who dropped his eyes. Hayford was a little touched, and in a sense, though quite unintentionally, made a parody of scholarship. He knew bibliographies by

the volumes and knew where to look for any out-of-the-way event or name that needed annotation, but Hayford was an ass. Once it had occurred to Professor Underhill that Hayford was something like a cenotaph: it looked like a grave, but no one was buried in it. As office mates, they got along very well. Hayford knew the gestures gentlemen commonly made and imitated them. It was no wonder Martha Smith could sit across from you and never hear a word, or that when she did remember your presence looked at you like a doe peering through a thicket. Their being office mates, of course, prevented either of them being an embarrassing presence to a younger colleague. Mercifully for Hayford, this explanation would never occur to him.

Another red light. Professor Underhill pushed against the backrest and sighed, took one final drag from the cigarette and flicked it out the window. In a moment the traffic moved again.

The inscription on the cigarette lighter read, *To John Underhill, our colleague.* And Alfred Johnson, the new chairman—Professor Underhill felt he hardly knew him—had made a very brief and discreet speech in his honor. He himself had said he did not wish to speak, and no one had insisted upon his doing so. Johnson had been in the department long enough to have heard the one legendary item that clung to Professor Underhill, and which allowed those who wished to be kind to say something sentimental about him, namely that, because he had been broken-hearted at the death of his wife, he had never remarried. Johnson had alluded to this, and Professor Underhill noticed that both of the young women instructors, sitting at a table slightly to the right of the main table, had blinked and smiled sadly. Over the years there had been times when Professor Underhill wished he had been such a romantic figure, but he knew he had not been. The truth was he could hardly remember Margaret. He suspected

that propinquity and the fact that people their age were getting married had brought about their marriage. Nor did he have any clear image of what sort of young man he had been. He did remember that they had been shy with each other. Neither of them had had any strong sexual feelings, and their efforts had usually ended in silent exhaustion and embarrassment. Once at a cocktail party—he could no longer remember who gave it or when or where it was held—he had heard a brassy-voiced woman speak contemptuously of her husband, "What a bedmate!" and he had winced as though she had said it of him. Therefore he almost always experienced a mild sense of amazement when he remembered that he and Margaret had had a daughter.

Now Professor Underhill's car reached the bridge that spanned the river a half mile above the campus. For years it had been one of his pleasures to walk along the riverbank, especially in the fall and spring. In those two seasons one could feel the pleasant passage of time. Not everyone felt the passage of time to be pleasant, but he did, and he acknowledged that he did. Perhaps his favorite poem was Swinburne's "Garden of Proserpine," especially the lines—

> We thank with brief thanksgiving
> Whatever gods may be
> That no life lives forever;
> That dead men rise up never;
> That even the weariest river
> Winds somewhere safe to sea.

Halfway across the bridge he turned his head left to look up the river and then right to look downstream. One had a fine view from the bridge, and today the water was a nice blue. On the far side of the bridge he slowed down,

then turned left to drive along River Boulevard to the campus.

Margaret had died a few days after Florence was born. The doctors had said heart failure, and perhaps that was what it was. He could remember the funeral procession; there was the hearse drawn by two shiny black horses, and he could remember sitting next to his older sister Vera in the carriage immediately behind the hearse. He could not remember the route the procession had taken, but he could remember Vera patting his forearm and saying he must be brave. After the funeral Vera insisted on taking the baby back to her home in Detroit, and he had been grateful to her. He and Vera had assured each other that he would see a good deal of Florence in the summer vacations. Vera always welcomed him profusely and her husband, Gerald, tried to be cordial, but he always felt like an intruder, and little Florence always treated him like the visitor he was. He never stayed more than a few days. Florence had come for the luncheon, had sat next to him and squeezed his hand when they all clapped for him at the end of Johnson's speech. He could not see that Florence bore any resemblance to himself or, so far as he could remember, to Margaret. His wife had been small-boned and short, and he was only five feet five, but Florence was a strapping woman, taller than he and broad both in the beam and the shoulders. She talked a lot about her husband, whom he had met once, and her two sons, whom he had never seen, back in Utica, New York, where she had moved after her marriage. Florence never referred to him as the boys' grandfather. That role was reserved for Gerald, who thus far had outlived Vera by sixteen years. That was as it should be because he had placed Florence in her ambiguous relationship to himself, and even if he had wanted the experience of being a grandfather, he had no right to it. The day after the

ncheon Florence said she had to get back to Utica. At the airport, she had kissed him good-by and said that they must keep in touch, and he had said yes, of course they should. As Florence reached the top of the stairway to the plane, she turned and waved to him. Raising his hand and waving in return, he knew he was saying good-by to a middle-aged woman who, somehow akin to him, was not really involved in his life, nor he in hers.

Where River Boulevard swung left away from the campus, he turned right onto one of the blue-stoned roads that cut across the campus in the form of a huge *X*. The trees and a few bushes were beginning to show buds, and here and there the grass was new green. As he approached the parking lot back of Allen Hall a dozen or more students, in their oddly assorted clothes, standing or moving slowly along the sidewalk, closed off the driveway. Coming to a stop, Professor Underhill remembered that once, years ago, he had heard someone refer to groups of students crossing a street as protoplasm on the move, and the remark had seemed cynical to him. By now, though, he had known so many generations of students that each classroom of faces looked almost alike to him.

Having parked the car, he walked across the gravel and up the wooden stairway of the old building. The hallway was dark as ever. His office door was slightly ajar, which meant that Hayford was there. He said hello quickly, then put his hat on the hook back of the door. As his office mate swung around in his swivel chair, Professor Underhill saw that today Hayford had on a bright red bow tie. Asked where he had been, Professor Underhill replied that he had bought a cemetery lot. Professor Smith slapped himself on the thigh and said that, by God, when the time came when he needed one, someone else could pick it out for him! Professor Underhill smiled, sat down at his desk and reached for a textbook he needed for his next

Date Due

BROWSING ROOM

Due	Returned	Due	Returned
DEC 19 '61	DEC 11 '61		
JAN 15 '62	JAN 3 '62		
JAN 28 '62	FEB 1 '62		
FEB 17 '62	FEB 13 '62		
MAR 7 '62	FEB 23 '62		
APR 12 '62	APR 9 '62		
NOV 24 '62	NOV 29 '62		
JAN 29 '64	JAN 16 '64		

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Mr. O'Connor, who has two degrees from Syracuse University and a Ph.D. from Columbia, has spent most of his adult life on campuses, with several years out for service in the Army. One of these Army years was spent in New Guinea where, he says, he began to perceive the rightness of Conrad's view of the natural world; another year he served in the Philippines.

Before the war Mr. O'Connor taught briefly at Louisiana State University; since the war he has been at the University of Minnesota. He has also been a Fulbright Lecturer at the University of Liege, and Berg Professor of English and American Literature at New York University. With Robert Penn Warren and Allen Tate, he is an editor of *American Writers,* a series of pamphlets aimed primarily at explaining American literature to foreign readers. He has written half a dozen volumes of literary criticism, textbooks, and some poems; and more recently he has been writing fiction.

Campus on the River makes it clear that Mr. O'Connor likes and understands university life. He views it with detachment, but also with sympathy and affection.

Campus on the River

Here, in a dozen beautifully written stories, William Van O'Connor demonstrates that the college professor, contrary to public opinion, does not live in an ivory tower. On the contrary, he lives and struggles in the intense atmosphere of a hierarchy where promotion and prestige depend upon his achievements as a scholar.

Each of these stories has the same locale, the campus on the river, and the muted theme which traverses each story and binds them all together is man's dependence on *love* and *need.*

The little world of the American university, Mr. O'Connor points out, is really the entire universe in microcosm; and in these stories he introduces us to characters who are familiar to us although we may have met them in a different light and under different circumstances. He writes with simplicity and taste, with candor, insight, and delicacy, about all the facets of human existence.

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